



THE  
CHURCH  
on the  
AVENUE

• HELEN R. •  
• MARTIN •



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# THE CHURCH ON THE AVENUE

A NOVEL

BY

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## PREFACE

To anticipate the criticism that, as the picture of a small town church, this story is not typical of the Church in general, I wish to state that while the setting is that of a little city, the church incidents recorded, the ministerial attitude portrayed in relation to public questions, the sermons briefly quoted (both the good ones and the bad ones) are all gathered from notorious instances in New York and Pittsburgh and from pastors and Bishops holding the highest places in their professions—with one obvious exception. My purpose in transplanting these instances to a small city background was simply to concentrate within a prescribed area in order to gain in vividness and momentum.



PART I

A VISITOR AT THE MANSE





# THE CHURCH ON THE AVENUE

## CHAPTER I

**I**T stirred Jane's sense of humor that her very first visitor at the manse after her marriage should be the intimate friend and roommate of her college days, Augusta Lawrence, who, when a year ago she had heard of Jane's possible betrothal to the Reverend Robert Watts, had written to protest against her marrying "anything so obsolete as a Christian minister and a domineering Scotchman at that!"

"A Scotchman's only idea of a wife," wrote Augusta dogmatically, "is that she keep her husband comfortable and be a successful breeder! I have visited relatives in Scotland and I found them all like that," she affirmed sweepingly. "You say Mr. Watts did not come to America until he was a full-fledged man and minister. In that case he'll never change. Scotchmen never do after maturity. They have to be caught young and trained, or as husbands they are preposterous. An idea once lodged in the brain of a Scotchman stays. You leave me no hope that your dominie may be an exception when you speak of him as your 'big, handsome, masterful Scotchman.'

"Jane, you are not the sort to cope with a proposition

like that!—a gentle yielding girl like you, so prone to take the line of least resistance, whose whole attitude in marriage will foster the man's natural inclination to bully you; to be opinionated and unpleasant. I shall be very sorry for you and really disappointed in you if you go on with this. I should think that the ideals that you and I forged out together in our college years would be some check upon your marrying this type of man. Marriage at best is a survival of a primitive and rather uncivilized institution, somewhat repugnant and indeed impossible to the highly developed modern woman. But such a mediæval marriage as you seem to be drifting into—allying yourself with the Church, an institution that is a mere survival!—so stultified that it could not be *galvanized* into life!

“My dear, those of us in whose hearts there is burning a vision of the social redemption of humanity have a more real and vital religion, a more daring faith, than any that I can discern in the Church of to-day. Our present social order, which is surely the arch-enemy of every Christian principle, has made the Church its beneficiary and servant.

“You can't go through with it, Jane—you're too honest, too intelligent and your sense of humor is too active. Even I, who unlike you am inclined to see the tragic rather than the funny side of life, can see what an absurdity the Church has become!

“Fortunately for your artistic tastes and temperament and your personal liberty, the day is past when the minister's wife can't play about pretty much like other people, with dancing, theaters, almost anything. (May

she smoke? Any way, you're not addicted.) But, Jane, may she address an audience and say what she honestly thinks about anything? May she be a conscientious objector to human slaughter—while the slaughter's good? May she believe—*really* believe—in the brotherhood of man? In free speech, free assemblage (not only of capitalists but of workers)?

"What, by the way, is Mr. Watts' attitude towards the things you and I have felt to be all important? If I know you, it simply isn't in you to go pussy-footing about your ideas and ideals—even if you do have the most amiable disposition in the world."

Jane had answered, "Little reck you, Augusta dear, to what depths of ignominy I have sunk. Gladly would I be the man's handmaiden, his serf, his concubine, anything that could keep me near him! Before the mighty force of love I find that all one's theories and even ideals become negligible. I can't consider them. You call marriage primitive and rather barbarous, but so primitive and barbarous a woman does love find me that compared to the glory of simply fulfilling the natural function of woman—creating a home and a family with the man I worship—all the other careers of service and honor now open to ambitious free women look to me tame, flat, tasteless, colorless and not worth while!

"The Christian minister part is, I admit, a bit discouraging, for I'm afraid I shall not make a very successful bluff at being the pastor's estimable wife. But I'd undertake anything—even a little pious hypocrisy (though I don't think I could go far in that rôle) for the sake of possessing Robert. So you see I've sunk

quite beneath your notice and am no more worthy to be called your friend.

"Perhaps some of the things you point out will cause me a bit of trouble in the days ahead—but I love Robert and nothing else seems to matter. And to be worthy of the gift of love, one must surely take some risks in this life. To be always cautious is to lose out.

"I'm afraid I must admit that Robert is conservative—quite so! But, Augusta, to such a pulpy state has love reduced me that I like even *that* about him! Anyway, they say it's the first twenty years of marriage that are the worst."

Jane had sorrowfully supposed that Augusta would find it hard to forgive what she would certainly consider very reprehensible light-mindedness towards matters which, in their college days, they had been wont to take very solemnly.

But now, just four months after her wedding day, Augusta was coming to visit her and her redoubtable Scotch Presbyterian minister in the Pennsylvania Dutch city of Leitersville, where the Presbyterian Church and Manse were the center not only of what was miscalled the religious life of the community, but of its social life as well, inasmuch as the Presbyterian Church members included most of the prosperous and influential families of the town.

The picturesque church and adjoining Manse were located centrally on "the Avenue," the name given to the one pretentious residence street; and as Presbyterians do not endow their churches with the names of saints, this church became "The Church On The Avenue." No



other church of Leitersville was wealthy enough to stand on the Avenue. The Episcopal Church, it is true, was just round the corner from the Avenue—which was symbolic; for it was also just around the corner in point of influence, power and wealth.

Naturally, then, the Presbyterian pastor's wife was a personage in the town; made much of; expected by the influential (that is, rich) of the congregation to show a becoming appreciation of their favors, while holding herself a little exclusive towards the less important members; she must not be *too* democratic.

For Leitersville was a typical Pennsylvania city, having, even in its most "exclusive" circle, very little culture, either social or educational. None of the prominent families were more than one, or at most two, generations from their Pennsylvania Dutch farms or villages and in few instances had their social development kept pace with their financial expansion; a condition apt to create the virulent type of snobbishness which is a peculiarity of the unsymmetrical growth of American social life.

The one long "fashionable" residence street appeared at first glance attractive, its large homes set in spacious lawns, its sidewalks well-paved and shaded by great old trees; but on closer inspection the houses proved to be of ugly architecture, manifesting crude taste. Only in a few cases where instead of native taste, that of a Philadelphia or New York architect had been given free expression, were the homes really beautiful—though these being simple and comparatively unadorned, were regarded by the community as not nearly so impressive as

the ginger-bread, complicated, many-angled, cupola-topped, bay-windowed homes designed by the owners themselves.

It was a matter of the most jubilant satisfaction to both Jane and her husband that their church and Manse did not express the native taste but that of a very good architect; and Jane, now that her critical and fastidious friend, Augusta Lawrence, was coming to visit her, felt this satisfaction afresh.

"She's been appointed librarian to the Leitersville Library," she explained Augusta's visit to the Reverend Robert over their breakfast in the cosy Manse dining-room, "and she'll stop with us for a few days while she's finding a boarding place."

Jane's habitually languid manner and the soft dreamy droop of her dark eyes were borne out by the musical drawl of her southern speech.

Mr. Watts, a well-built man of about thirty-two years of age, looked, this morning as always, freshly groomed from his shining shoes to his polished finger nails. In a town where even "the best people" bathed only once or twice a week, the Reverend Robert Watts' extreme personal neatness was, all unknown to himself, an asset. He looked more virile, but not less furtive, than the modern clergyman is apt to look, and his countenance, though not conspicuously intelligent, was not dull. Although his face always wore a studied earnestness and gravity, as befitted his calling, and his manner was invariably dignified and serious, yet there was in his eyes not only a twinkle of humor but a genuine kindliness. While mentally and spiritually he was "the average man

on the street," he had the saving grace of personality. One felt his personality on sight. And since he would never in all his career rise above the dead level of mediocrity to that of thinkers, saints and martyrs; since he would always conform, changing his mind only when the consensus of opinion changed, he would therefore, with this added asset of a winning personality, rise very high indeed in the Church, an institution supported by people like unto himself—conventional, commonplace, negligible. Outside his own denomination he would remain unknown.

Already his great popularity and rapid rise in the ministry to the pastorate of the large, rich, important and typical church of Leitersville had given him a self-confidence out of proportion to his abilities. He was becoming obstinate (he called it firm) in defending his prejudices (reasoned opinions were not in his line) against the questioning of what was established or the suggestion of what was new and untried; and like most ministers of the day he was an adept at twisting the most obvious principles of truth and right to serve his own security.

"Augusta is apt to stir this town up," smiled Jane as she sipped her coffee.

"Eh?" questioned Robert warily, a note of disapproval in his tone at the idea of a girl librarian coming in from outside to disturb what he considered a very satisfactory town.

"She's so very modern and clever and this town is a survival!" Jane pointed out. "I do wonder what she'll think of our menagerie here any way!"

Robert looked grave. "Speak kindly of the town that

gives you your living, dear. I don't admire that type of woman."

"What type, Robert?"

"The modern aggressive, would-be superior type. They do so admire themselves! How in the world did *you* (as womanly as you are!) ever come to make a friend of that ridiculous sort of person?"

"We were classmates and pals at college for four years and Augusta isn't ridiculous, dear!"

"A woman like that seems to me a perversion of nature!"

"Why, dear? Because she has brains?" inquired Jane as one humbly seeking information.

"Because she is so self-conscious of having (as she fondly thinks) brains!"

Jane reflected, "How will he take it, poor dear, when he discovers what I've thus far succeeded in concealing from him—that his own wife has a few brains and is quite 'self-conscious' of it!"

"A woman like that," Robert dogmatized, "has no feminine charm!"

"Augusta no charm! Ha! When you see the radiant creature! She's perfectly beautiful, Robert—tall and fair and stately!"

"But I prefer them little and dark and warm-hearted and tender and simple—like you! No," affirmed Robert obstinately, "I don't approve of your Augusta."

"A girl without charm could not be the dominating center of the leading group at college and the president of her class for four years, could she?" Jane loyally chal-

lenged him. "Why, even the college professors came under her spell!"

"If there's one thing I don't like it is a dominating woman! Fancy the poor wretch she marries!"

"Oh, but no one believes more firmly than Augusta in 'self-determination'—at least for India, Ireland, Mexico, China—"

"India! Ireland!" Robert frowned. "You see? Just to be contrary! And superior! Because the best judgment of the world is that those nations are not ready for self-government!"

"No, not so long as they are ready for exploitation—I agree with you, dear," Jane nodded cheerfully.

Robert regarded her doubtfully. "I shall not stand by, my dear, you know, and let that woman inject nonsense into your womanly heart!"

(Jane noticed that he did not say "womanly mind." Robert never referred to women's minds.)

"But, my dear," she protested, "I don't need Augusta to help me do my thinking!"

"Of course not, with me by to guide you," he threw at her with a grin. "You know, dear, Mr. Leiter won't tolerate a librarian in his employ who tries to (as you put it) 'stir up' his town."

"His town! He does own it, doesn't he?"

"If by 'modern' you mean radical—do you?" asked Robert.

"If it's radical to advocate abolition of war and of all brands of human exploitation, domestic and foreign, then Augusta does go to the ragged edge. Almost as near to

the edge," added Jane, her guileless eyes meeting Robert's innocently, "as your Master Jesus went when He said, 'He who loveth God, loveth his brother also.' "

"Do you mean she's a kind of Socialist and will stir things up among the workers here? As if there wasn't enough dissatisfaction among that class!"

"Augusta thinks there isn't nearly enough. Or rather, not the right kind of dissatisfaction. So she is asking, like the prophet, Isaiah, you remember, Robert dear, 'What mean ye that ye crush my people and grind the face of the poor?' "

"I'm afraid, Jane dear, that your friend is a rather mischievous and foolish woman!"

"She is not a weak one anyway!"

"You know what a conservative town Leitersville is," said Robert warningly.

"Oh, isn't it deadly?" sighed Jane.

"A bit narrow, I admit. But better that than having it always in a ferment of unrest. A guest here at the Manse must be careful. You will have to warn your friend, my dear."

"She's strong for Americanism, Robert—she believes in free speech. Don't you?"

"It has its drawbacks. I believe in it of course with limitations. Did, or does, this dominating young woman dominate *you*?" he asked jealously.

"She used to, a little. But you beat her to it. And now she doesn't approve of me any more."

"From what you say of her, I should think she never could have approved of a womanly girl like you, my dear! But why has she withdrawn her approval?"



"Well, you see, I married quite conventionally—"

"What? What on earth—How else *would* you have married?"

"On a high plane, my love."

"Are we married on a low plane, my dear? What's it all about, Jane?"

"I'm afraid you would not think it 'decent,' Robert dear, my discussing that 'high plane.' Our low, commonplace plane, my true love, is to you the only decent sort of marriage. I'll let Augusta talk to you—if her conversational style isn't too strong meat for you. You see, she's so damned honest—"

"My dear!" protested Robert, repressing his inclination to laugh at the grotesqueness of such language from the lips of the most childishly innocent face he had ever seen among women. "Isn't she a *lady*?"

Unfortunately Jane was at the moment taking a sip of coffee and the sudden laughter which this question provoked made her sputter and choke.

"She is something so much more, Robert dear!" she answered when she had recovered. "I don't, by the way, know one thing about her family connections."

"Although you've been intimate so many years?"

"It's odd, isn't it?" admitted Jane. "Robert!" She planted her elbows on the table, rested her chin on her interlaced fingers and gazed across at her husband with a puzzled pucker of her brows which made her look, in Robert's eyes, adorably like a perplexed infant. "There's a most baffling mystery about Augusta. She never would tell any one a thing about her family; or where her home was; or whether she *had* a home. I've always thought

there was a look of tragedy about her eyes. She has certainly gone through suffering—”

“Probably nothing more than a case of a proud girl’s having lifted herself above a humble family that she is ashamed to own.”

“She is not like that. There’s not a small or a dishonest thing about her. If she’s ashamed of her family it is because they’re shameful, not because they’re humble.”

“Is she poor?”

“Not conspicuously. I don’t even know, really! She never seemed to get letters from home. Once in a long while she would seem to be fearfully upset by something she received in her mail—she’d go about wild-eyed for days—or so depressed that nothing could rouse her. I used to fairly burn up with curiosity about her. I do yet sometimes. I wonder whether I shall ever know—”

“Didn’t you ever ask her any questions?”

“One doesn’t ask Augusta personal questions. But I did ask her once where her home was and whether she had any people. She simply evaded answering me. Whatever the dark mystery is it has made her rather cynical about love and marriage. She doesn’t believe in romance much.”

“If her family connections are so questionable,” said Robert dubiously, his professional caution on the alert, “you’ll have to be very careful, my dear! We can’t have any unpleasant scandal connected with the Manse!”

“No, indeed,” smiled Jane, “such as my proving cowardly in friendship.”

"To be prudent is not necessarily to be cowardly," Robert contended.

Jane thought it was, but she usually avoided discussing these ministerial fine distinctions. She told herself, however, that Augusta's friendship under any circumstances whatever, was worth more to her than Robert's whole big congregation of sleek church members.

On the eve of her friend's arrival she dug out of a trunk in the garret a college group photograph and examined earnestly Augusta's very lovely face. She noted with a fresh interest the faint lines of tragic suffering about the brow and mouth, the smoldering fire in the eyes.

"She could be a martyr for a great cause, Augusta could! *I* could not. At the first hint of thumbscrews I'd recant!"

And yet, wouldn't Augusta be apt, with her quick, keen insight and her almost appalling honesty, to be a bit cynical about martyrs?—spotting their weak points, their egotism and self-righteousness. Strange that with that little streak of cynicism coloring all her thinking like a mild poison in her blood, she was nevertheless so lovable. Was it something in her secret history that made her (whose spirit demanded high and fine ideals in life) unable to find and keep such ideals?

"She longs to find life beautiful and she can only find it commonplace. She's cynical even about herself!" thought Jane as she took from her desk a letter from Augusta and read,

"I have a faculty, only intermittently active, for look-

ing at myself in a detached way, critically, discriminat-  
ingly—and I'm not proud of what I see at such times.  
It is humiliating, even devastating, to the self-delusive  
vanity in which I usually walk through life as through a  
mist which delightfully obscures me from my real self!  
For I see in these moments of insight the pettiness and  
vulgarity of my ambitions, the contemptible littleness of  
many of my pet aversions—

"This honesty of hers that won't let her cheat even  
herself," thought Jane, "makes her such a wonderful  
person to know!"

She regretted her tactlessness in having prejudiced  
Robert against her friend.

"But he can't escape her charm. Every one feels  
it—even the people she antagonizes by outraging their  
prejudices."

She was quite sure that if Robert were not so irrev-  
ocably in love with her, he would probably fall in love  
with Augusta in spite of their inevitable mutual antagon-  
ism. "For I have not lived twenty-four years without  
having learned what sex charm can do! And Augusta  
certainly does have it!"

And just here Jane realized one advantage in being  
a minister's wife—the first she had as yet come upon.

"If your husband's a minister he's got to stick.  
You're safe, he's nailed. The least deflection from the  
rôle of a faithful spouse, and his career is smashed!"

However, it did not need the Church to hold Robert  
to her. She knew too well how truly and deeply he  
loved her.

## CHAPTER II

IT seemed a bit unfortunate, in view of Augusta's pronounced "feminism," and her opinion of Scotchmen as husbands, that, arriving a few hours before she was expected, she should discover Jane on the front piazza (which was glassed in as a sun-parlor) in the very domestic attitude of darning her husband's socks.

The visit began well, however, with Augusta's spontaneous and satisfactory enthusiasm over the picturesque Manse and its furnishings, as she was led up-stairs to her dainty bedroom.

"This home delightfully expresses you, Jane!"

"But it's mostly my wedding gifts and as I didn't select them myself, it doesn't all express me. I hope the china angels on the parlor mantel (the gift of the choir) don't express me!"

"I see your touch everywhere—in the cosy hominess, the way you have disposed of things, the way the pictures are hung, the unique wall paper. Does your husband appreciate your taste?"

"So much so as to say it's Scotch!"

"Who ever heard that the Scotch were artistic? Your home looks as though you loved it. I can quite see that there may be compensations," she began thoughtfully—but paused rather expressively—

"For being the wife of a Scotchman and a parson, do you mean, dear?" drawled Jane.

"Compensations for a woman's sacrifice in marriage!"

"And are there compensations for a man's sacrifice, too, do you think?"

"Does he sacrifice anything?—for all that he gets!" asked Augusta, as she opened her suit case and began disposing of its contents in closet and bureau, while she eyed dubiously Jane in the window-seat, working industriously on a ministerial sock.

"Well, for one thing," replied Jane, "he takes on a partner who spends most of his hard-earned income."

To her surprise this simple statement produced a rather remarkable effect upon Augusta, making her look up quickly with a start, an expression of mingled apprehension and inquiry in her eyes. "What—what makes you—" she faltered, but cut herself off short as she met Jane's puzzled glance. "Do you know any wives who do that?" she asked with an elaborate indifference, her face hidden for an instant behind the lid of her suit case.

"Why, we all do it," responded Jane.

Augusta closed her suit case, shoved it under the bed and came to sit near Jane in a comfortable chintz-covered armchair.

"Well," she smiled, her eyes on Jane's darning, "you seem to be establishing your economic right to *some* of your husband's income. I will admit that a home like this may be a very attractive background for one's life—if one can be strong enough to avoid making it one's *whole* life. You are not going to let marriage and housekeeping submerge you, are you, Jane?"

"I find they can be very engrossing—marriage and housekeeping."



"That's the danger of course—letting the lesser obligations which marriage undoubtedly entails push aside the bigger possibilities of life."

"Some women see no bigger possibilities than keeping their husbands happy and comfortable," Jane peaceably smiled as she rather ostentatiously began on another enormous hole in the heel of an appallingly large sock.

"Don't you let yourself degenerate into that sort of a woman!" pleaded Augusta. "You'll probably have a harder struggle to resist the tendency than if you had married an American. You have to struggle not only for your own ideals, but against your husband's. You've never told me that Mr. Watts is an *exceptional* Scotchman."

"Only in his excessive Scotchness, I'm afraid!"

"What basis of union did you find then?" Augusta asked rather chillingly.

"Well, you see, we fell in love with each other."

"You primitive child! Do you mean to—oh!" Augusta broke off, a tide of color flushing her fine, earnest face as her eyes happened to fall on a bowl of orchids on a table beside the bed. "When did they come?"

"This morning by express from New York," answered Jane as Augusta rose and went across the room to bury her blushes in the flowers. "As the box was labeled 'flowers' I opened it and put them in water. There was no card. You know who sent them?"

"Yes—they come to me every day no matter where I am."

"I hope he is equally lavish in the matter of candy and if so, that you will stay here quite a while, dear, since

a minister's salary and Huyler's are sadly incompatible."

"I think I'd be almost insulted if a man treated me so trivially as to send me candy," said Augusta musingly as she fingered the flowers caressingly. "It suggests a relation between the sexes that I loathe."

"Does the gentleman who sends the orchids daily, whereso'er you rove, share your views about things in general, dear?"

"By no means! He interested me at first because I found his ironical way of looking at life congenial to me. But now he's becoming so romantic and sentimental!" said Augusta rather ruefully, as she returned to her armchair. There was a strained, troubled note in her voice that caught Jane's attention.

"You have always had that rather 'primitive' effect upon men—have you noticed? Well, what shall you do about it? As beautiful a face and figure as yours, Augusta, are predestined for marriage."

"But I would marry no man whose love was based upon nothing higher than the mere biologic lure of physical beauty!"

"Oh, gee!" breathed Jane, "if you said a thing like that before Robert!"

"I shall be glad of an opportunity to!"

"He'd think you were indecent, I warn you! 'Biologic lure'—gracious! Tell me about this sender of orchids—who is he? What is he?"

Augusta seemed to wince from the question. "Not now. Some time—perhaps. How awfully industrious you are!" she commented with a shade of disparagement

in her voice as Jane with unflagging zeal attacked another sock.

"Yes," responded Jane with what sounded like forced cheerfulness, "I'm trying to get them all done to-day; Robert is so—particular."

"'Particular?'"

"About his clothes being well taken care of."

"Do you spend *much* of your time on such things?"

"It seems to be necessary," sighed Jane. "And Robert so loves to see me being domestic."

"He would!" nodded Augusta grimly. "It would not occur to a Scotchman that you, a gifted college-bred woman, might find higher uses for your time! Oh, how well I know them! But for any man to have such an idea of *you*, Jane! It's a shock to me!"

"Oh, if you are shocked already!" said Jane darkly. "You know, dear, all my friends and all my parents were opposed to my marriage. Father agreed with you in scorning my intelligence for marrying a minister; Mother's worldly ambition for me was disappointed; you blamed Robert for being a Scotchman; my other friends didn't seem to think my qualifications for being a pastor's wife very conspicuous. No one was pleased. Except Robert. Robert was pleased. Quite so."

"Weren't you pleased?"

"I was so busy keeping Robert pleased, I couldn't think of myself very much."

"Dear me! And the rôle of pastor's wife—are you finding in it *any* genuine self-expression?"

"Well, not so it would dazzle you! But I'm at least

finding some entertainment. You know, Augusta, I'm capable of extracting entertainment out of any station in life to which it pleaseth God to call me—out of a term in jail, or being in exile in Siberia, a captive on a pirate ship, an outcast in a leper colony—these situations would be to me fraught with interest and excitement. Now the job of being a Presbyterian pastor's wife in a small town—well, one could not imagine anything more deadly *apparently*. Yet I'm in a constant state of almost feverish interest in the characters and the goings-on in our parish. Oh, I shall presently such tales unfold to you! Robert is kept in a permanent condition of astonishment at the drama I am all the time seeing, where he, without my help, would see only hum-drum. There's only one thing I find a little boring—"

"Well? I'm really curious!"

"The way a few of the very wealthy families of our congregation enjoy themselves condescending to me and being gracious unto me."

"But don't they know who you *are*?"

"How would they? I can't go round explaining to people that an ancient governor of South Carolina was my great-grandfather—and it doesn't show on me, does it? And who am I, anyway? That I come from an old well-known southern family is not a matter of national importance and it does not alter the fact that my husband holds his job as the gift of these people; that we are dependent upon their money for our living. It's just a bit galling to me!"

"There is probably no one in the whole town who is your social or intellectual equal," Augusta surmised.

"If there is I haven't met It."

"Yet they'd patronize you!"

"I suspect they've been accustomed (our 'best families,' I mean) to having their pastor's wives toady to them a bit, for they seem so puzzled over me!"

"I'm sure *any* congregation would be apt to find you, as its pastor's wife, puzzling!"

Jane rose, her sewing bag on her arm. "Robert will be coming in soon from his afternoon pastoral calls—so we'll have to go down stairs—I must be on the spot."

"On the spot? On what spot?"

"On the spot where he expects to see me when he comes home tired and harassed," answered Jane, as arm in arm the two friends strolled from the room, down the hall towards the stairway.

"It sounds amazingly arbitrary to 'expect' you to be on a special spot!"

"Robert does expect those little attentions."

"And of course he is equally assiduous in paying 'those little attentions' to you?"

"Well, hardly; it's not the same thing. He expects me of course to see after my own comfort—I'm not a child that I need to be seen after. And he is so absorbed in his work—a man's work, you know—so much bigger and more important than a woman's."

"So he has got you that far along towards his Scotch point of view! Instead of your raising him to your American standard!"

"I've always told you, Augusta dear, that I'm not a strong character like you."

"It's not weakness in your case; it's laziness. You

simply take the line of least resistance. And that's unworthy of you, dear, after the awful fight we women have had for a larger freedom and a fuller life. It's up to a woman not to let her work become trivial or less important than a man's."

"I do try to see my housekeeping not as an end in itself, but as my means of helping Robert to do his work—and he expects—"

"He 'expects!' Dear me, Jane! To meet Mr. Watts' expectations seems to have become your life work!"

"Love does reduce us women to a sorry pass, I'm afraid!" Jane laughed, with a little catch in her voice.

"'Love?'" repeated Augusta with a slight lift of her eyebrows.

"Once you've married that sender of orchids, my dear, you'll probably fall in line like the rest of us."

"I'll never be so weak as to—"

"Oh, there's Robert!" whispered Jane rather breathlessly, a hint of awe in her tone as, reaching the first landing of the stairs, they heard the outer front door open. "I do hope," she added nervously, "you will make a good impression on him, Augusta dear! Which of course you will," she added politely. "He is so particular about my friends!"

"Chooses your friends for you, does he?" asked Augusta in a tone of suspicious sweetness.

"Of course not exactly, but—well, you know a wife does want her husband to be pleased with her friends and of course I know Robert can't help thinking *you're* all right," said Jane almost cajolingly.

"I'm afraid he will find me everything he *doesn't* think



all right, Jane!" said Augusta, regarding her friend in some bewilderment; for easy-going though she knew her to be, this over-meek wifeliness did not seem quite natural to her.

"I admit your views might seem odd to him—do please conceal them, Augusta!"

"On the contrary he shall hear them, Jane—I warn you!"

The inner front door opened and the Reverend Robert Watts appeared in the wide hall below.

Jane ran down stairs to him, while Augusta slowly followed, witnessing, in her dignified advance, Jane's conciliatory manner to the man as she stood submissively before him, while he handed to her or piled on her outstretched arms his overcoat, several paper packages, a big book, his dripping umbrella, his muddy overshoes. But Augusta did not see the stealthy glance of understanding—almost a grinning wink—which they exchanged.

"Ah, here is your friend," the minister said suavely, turning to greet their guest as she reached the foot of the stairs and not waiting to be presented by Jane, whose struggles in disposing of his belongings incapacitated her for performing that office.

"Miss Lawrence," said Mr. Watts, bowing ceremoniously over her hand, "I am glad to welcome Jane's dear friend to our house."

The man's prepossessing manner of homage to herself in the face of his unchivalrous use of his wife as a hat-rack, found Augusta more bewildered than ever. "Don't be too glad," she warned him as, with quite un-

conscious coquetry, she looked up, smiling, into his attractive face, "for I'm afraid I'm going to prove a discordant note in Jane's peaceful nest!"

"'Discordant?'" repeated Mr. Watts, inclining his head inquiringly as he led the guest into his study, a large bright room which opened from one side of the hall. He placed a rocking-chair for her in the bay-window and sat down opposite her in a commodious armchair, while Jane, elaborately ignored (as it seemed to Augusta) found a straight-backed, uncomfortable looking chair, the only kind remaining, and resumed her darning.

"I warn you, Mr. Watts, I'm going to stir Jane up!"

"Stir her up? Does she need it? She seems to me to be doing very well!"

"I'm afraid she's letting herself lose sight of some of the things which our little coterie at college thought very essential."

"The undergraduates called our little exclusive coterie THE ILLUMINATI, Robert," put in Jane explanatorily.

"Ah? But what are the essential things which Jane is losing sight of?" inquired Robert.

"Well, her right to self-development, self-expression. Jane has talents which should not be wasted."

"Has she? But you see, Miss Lawrence," Mr. Watts disposed of Jane conclusively, "Jane is now married to me."

"Our modern American conception of marriage," said Augusta grimly, "doesn't involve the idea of arrested development on the part of the wife."

"She develops her heart. A highly developed heart is a woman's best attribute."

"Scotch mid-Victorian sentimentality!" pronounced Augusta. "Jane is slumping horribly and I'm going to pull her up!"

Mr. Watts raised a shapely deprecating hand. "I hope not. She is better as she is,"—with a twirl of his thumb in the direction of the figure toiling over her darning.

"I liked her better as she was."

"But it is an attractive sight—to see a wife domestic, industrious, useful. Jane suits me admirably as she is."

"And you are sure you 'suit' her equally well?" inquired Augusta blandly.

"That question I had supposed was settled when she consented to marry me."

"An American husband knows he's got to look to it that he *keeps* his wife. He can't get slack on the job. I'm afraid Jane forgets she is an American wife."

"She *is* greatly improved. Almost as good now as a Scotch wife."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Augusta.

"I have no cause to complain. On the contrary. Bring me, now, Jane, my tea and the evening paper."

"Yes, Robert."

Jane rose and left the room, returning in a moment followed by a trim maid bearing a daintily appointed tea tray.

"Jane," said her husband when she had served him and Augusta and was about to help herself, "don't you see that it is growing dark?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Jane apologetically as she rose at once to switch on the lights.

"My dear," Robert slightly raised his voice to speak

to her across the room, "be so good as to fetch me the book I handed to you in the hall."

"Yes, Robert," answered Jane, an odd shakiness in her voice which caught Augusta's startled attention and diverted her from seeing not only the flash of amusement that passed between the husband and wife, but the sudden betraying redness in Robert's face, the compression of his lips and the momentary shaking of his broad shoulders.

When after a moment Jane returned from the hall with the book, Robert had quite regained his composure and Jane's voice was steady as she asked, with a glance at the title of the book before giving it up, "Something new and interesting, Robert dear?"

"Yes, yes, but not for you; not for a woman. Women should not dabble in things beyond their depth. Better stick to your needle," with a lordly motion towards the sewing basket.

"Yes, Robert—excuse me."

"Take my cup, my dear," he stopped her as she was about to sit down again.

"So," he turned to Augusta, who with mingled incredulity and disdain was watching this little scene, "you are not only going to be our new librarian, but also bring light to darkest Leitersville?"

"Well, Mr. Watts, I flatter myself I might give *you* a little light as to woman's new status in the world."

"Yes? Well, although I am rather familiar with all the tiresome phases of the fretting woman question, yet," he added gallantly, "it would give me great pleasure to hear you—and more especially to see you." He beamed

upon her with open admiration of her loveliness—while Jane resumed her darning.

“But unless you take me seriously, Mr. Watts—”

“But who could take you otherwise, my dear Miss Lawrence? Of course I recognize that you are an exceptional woman.”

Augusta did not waste time denying a thing so obvious. “Surely you know, Mr. Watts, that the women of the future (even Scotch women) are not going to be satisfied with the life they used to put up with when they could not help themselves.”

“What I know,” smiled Mr. Watts, “is that you are much too beautiful to be giving yourself to a mission instead of to a man. And you will find it so much more entertaining to be loved than to have a mission. Love will make you, my dear Miss Lawrence, find a mission as dust and ashes in your mouth!”

“To be loved and cherished as—as Jane is, I suppose you mean?” asked Augusta slowly, thoughtfully.

“You see how contented she is.”

“But she should not be!” cried Augusta in a tone that betrayed how bad beyond her expectations she was finding things.

“A husband and babies are the only things that can make a woman happy and keep her out of mischief,” affirmed Mr. Watts.

“Does the man Jane Sherwin married have no higher idea of her than that?” asked Augusta sadly.

“Isn’t motherhood the highest pinnacle woman can attain?” asked Mr. Watts gravely.

“It’s only a pinnacle if you make it one. The mil-

lions of mothers who, under our modern industrialism, work in factories to help earn the family living—what chance do they have for fine and beautiful motherhood? We permit this hideous industrialism and then talk about motherhood being ‘the highest pinnacle!’ And why, at its best, is motherhood such a pinnacle? I’m not at all sure our pitiable race is worth reproducing.”

“Yet we have scriptural sanction for the holy joy of a mother because a man is born,” argued Mr. Watts.

Augusta repressed her inclination to reply, “A man like you, for instance, whose job is to maintain an outworn superstition, a Church that has ceased to function!”

“In most cases,” she said, “the man that is born isn’t worth rejoicing over. I insist that while motherhood may be beautiful, it’s in most cases commonplace. Any cat can be a mother.”

Robert evidently found this rather “strong meat,” for he winced. “If you will excuse me now,” he said, rising, “I shall go up-stairs and rest for an hour. Come, Jane, my dear, and bring me my slippers.”

“Yes, Robert. Excuse me a minute, Augusta.”

Augusta, whose pained gaze followed Robert as he most impolitely passed from the room ahead of his wife, recalled how he had, a little while before, with such elaborate courtesy stepped aside to let *her* pass before him into his study; his fine manners were never for his wife, it seemed! Well, Jane’s idiotic acquiescing in such a state of things made her deserve just about what she was getting. So concluded Augusta.



### CHAPTER III

“**R**OBERT is having breakfast in bed this morning,” Jane explained next day when Augusta, coming down stairs, discovered her in the dining-room arranging a tray. “Sit down, dear, and I’ll be with you as soon as I’ve taken this up to him.”

“Is he ill?”

“Oh, no, he’s never ill. A little tired. Let me see, have I everything?—orange juice, coffee, oat meal, toast, egg, morning paper,” she anxiously ran over the items. “Now if you’ll excuse me just a minute,” she said as she picked up the heavy tray.

“But, dear,” Augusta protested, “it’s too heavy for you. Why don’t you let that husky maid carry it up?”

“Oh, my dear, Robert wouldn’t like that! He expects me to see after his little comforts. He thinks it’s so—so, well, womanly. He likes to be mothered. To have a fuss made over him. I find men are great babies. Scotchmen any way.”

She labored out of the room and up the stairs with her loaded tray, while Augusta, looking disgusted, sat down to the breakfast table. Who would ever have believed that Jane Sherwin could come to such a silly pass as this?

“What makes you act so idiotically?” she frankly asked when Jane, looking fresh and radiant in a pretty morning frock and not at all down-trodden and unhappy as

Augusta felt she *should* look, came back to take her place before the coffee tray.

"Just you wait until you have succumbed to that man who bombards you daily with orchids (I wish he'd insult you by varying it with chocolates) and you, too, will count it your highest privilege to serve him."

"Jane, you make me positively ill!"

"Do you still see yourself, Augusta, as we saw ourselves when we were solemn seniors at college? We were so conscious of our superiority, weren't we? I think we were weird, Gussie!"

"A love that makes one deny all one's ideals is debasing!"

"You find me base, dear?" inquired Jane with an impersonal curiosity that made Augusta stare at her.

"You are not like the same girl, Jane!"

"Robert thinks me greatly improved, as I think he told you."

"His ideas of a woman! Of a wife! Just what I warned you!"

"Oh, but, my dear, I've real things to worry about—so that my mere prerogatives as a woman must take a back seat. A minister and his wife to be successful I find have got to be such rotten hypocrites; to pretend to be just what your congregation expects you to be; to conceal carefully your every spontaneous idea and emotion inasmuch as your congregation, who are never visited by ideas or emotions, would be outraged by any such manifestations. The blind, dull acceptance of 'a pattern of custom'—"

"Janie!" came Robert's voice from the up-stairs hall. "I'm getting up now, my dear."

"Yes, Robert," Jane called back. "Excuse me, Augusta, I must go up and lay out his fresh underclothes and turn on the water for his bath. It won't take me two minutes, dear."

It was that evening over their after dinner coffee in the study, all of them comfortably relaxed after the strenuous afternoon they had spent in finding a small apartment for Augusta, that she, unable longer to repress her indignation at the complacency with which Jane accepted her outrageous relation to her husband, "had it out" with the Reverend Mr. Watts.

He was leaning back in his favorite commodious arm-chair, his physical well-being after a good dinner manifest in his ruddy, genial countenance, as he pointed out to Augusta the advantages she would find in a domestic rather than in a public career.

"So you think I ought to make it the worthy object of my whole life to look after the bodily comfort of some man, *don't* you?" inquired Augusta.

"Exactly," he smiled serenely. "A woman's natural function in the economy of society, as I often point out to Jane, is to make it possible for man to do the *great* work of the world."

"Suppose her work happens to be greater than her husband's. Suppose Edith Wharton married Harold Bell Wright! Which one should wash the dishes and make the beds?"

"But Edith Wharton would not marry Harold Bell Wright, you see."

Augusta wanted to say, "She might—since Jane married *you!*" But she repressed herself and asked, "And what, in your opinion, Mr. Watts, is a woman's compensation for living only for and in her husband's success?"

"Her reward is in seeing her husband useful, efficient, respected by the community."

"You think that ought to satisfy her ambition, her mind and heart and soul?"

"Jane has everything that is essential to a woman's happiness," declared Robert.

"That is, she has *you*, Mr. Watts! My gracious!"

"You look appalled, Miss Lawrence!"

"Mr. Watts, *I* shouldn't find being your valet all that was essential to my happiness in life."

"No, Robert, she wouldn't. She'd see you—eh—damned first. Wouldn't you, Gussie?"

"I would, Jane!"

"Ladies, ladies!" protested Robert with a lift of his hand. "Miss Lawrence, don't you spoil my Jane for me!"

"I wish I could unspoil her! You have dragged her down from the heights on which I had thought she was going to live her life!"

"Was she ever 'on the heights,' my little Jane? But it must have been chilly up there—she's better off in my big arms—eh, my bonnie lass?" he demanded, roughly patting Jane's shoulder.

They were interrupted at this point by the arrival of the daily box of orchids from New York.

Jane left the room with Augusta to get her a bowl of water.

It was while they were arranging the flowers in Augusta's room that Jane begged for "a few details" about this devoted suitor. But Augusta, apparently very reluctant to talk about him, stiffened and there was a light in her eyes that Jane thought too cold, almost too fearful, to suggest the light of love.

Then, suddenly, like one throwing off a spell, she seemed to make up her mind to break her silence. Her color deepened and her bosom rose and fell as though under stress of strong feeling.

"You will be surprised to learn, Jane, that he is from this very town of Leitersville."

"Oh!" exclaimed Jane, delightedly, "then do accept him and stay here, for I'm starving for a friend; one with whom I can be sincere—as you and I have always been with each other."

"You and Robert?" suggested Augusta tentatively.

"I mean with a girl. Who is the man, Augusta? Can any one good enough for you come out of Leitersville?"

"We met three months ago at Nancy Colwell's home in New York. He is a lawyer and works exclusively for his father who has big interests; owns the great iron works here for one thing."

"Charles Leiter!" exclaimed Jane astonished.

"Yes," said Augusta, her face flushed and, to Jane's mystification, a look of tragedy in her eyes that belied the even, cool tone of her voice. "Charles has told me of his knowing you and Mr. Watts."

"It's so queer to think of you, of all people, marrying into *that* family!"

"Why?" quickly demanded Augusta in a tone that

sounded to Jane strangely like breathless suspense.

"You would not ask why if you had ever met them. You haven't met them, have you?"

"N—no. And I'm not going to marry into the family! But—but what's the matter with the family?"

"They are so different from Charles that no one would ever take him for a Leiter of Leitersville. He is educated far beyond his people."

"Whatever his origin, he himself is genuinely cultured," pronounced Augusta almost aggressively. "Are the Leiters one of the families you spoke of—of Pennsylvania Dutch blood, who try to patronize you?"

Jane nodded. "Pillars of our church. Vulgarly rich and appallingly common. But they rule all unchecked everything in this town—the Country Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, the Leitersville Men's Club, the Church, the School board, our two newspapers, the law courts, the Republican party. No Labor Unions are allowed to exist in Leitersville and the wages paid here are the lowest in the country. No laboring man owns his own home. He rents it from the Leiter Company and if he joins a Union, out he goes and his family and furniture after him. You see every one in Leitersville seems to draw his living either directly or indirectly from the Leiter industries. It naturally follows that the masses of the people here are exploited in order that fortunes may be piled up for a few. But Mr. Leiter and his clan give so largely to charities, the Church and other organizations that he is looked upon by the people who create his wealth as their benefactor



who not only allows them to work for him for wages which really keep them housed and fed, but also supplies them with free concerts, a free hospital, a free library, what he calls 'art exhibits,' an amusement park and an annual fête—sops to Cerberus of course. The old Roman stunt of keeping the people (who do all the work for a bare living) drugged, satisfied."

"In other words, you have here in Leitersville an epitome of the way the capitalistic system works?" asked Augusta.

"In its most finished and perfect form," agreed Jane.

"Jane, why doesn't Robert organize the churches here to fight such industrial autocracy? It seems to me that as the leading minister here he has such a great opportunity."

Jane laughed involuntarily. "Fight Mr. Leiter! He would be fighting himself! The churches, especially ours, are the strongest allies of this sort of thing! They've jolly well got to be! Mr. Leiter practically owns The Church on The Avenue. And," said Jane, a troubled look in her eyes, "Robert sees nothing dreadfully wrong in it at all."

"And you?"

"My very soul loathes it, Augusta!"

"That's hopeful. Something ought to be done about it and done quickly."

"Nothing will be—unless you marry Charles and start something."

"Jacob Leiter's power in Leitersville ought to be broken."

"More Jacob Leiters would rise up in his place. It is the system that produces Jacob Leiters that must be changed."

"Yes, of course," said Augusta, "and it does seem a Herculean job!"

"Augusta!"

"Well?"

"I could warn you against marrying the rather spoiled son of a vulgar plutocrat—even as you warned me against my Scotch Presbyterian minister—but I won't. Because I feel it's disgusting to marry from any other motive than the compelling, driving passion of a great love."

"That passes—and other things remain. Such as—well—"

"Yes? Go on—don't mind me."

"Well, on the one hand, selfishness, tyranny, lack of sympathetic understanding; or, on the other, a wonderful comradeship based on congenial tastes, ideals, aims; surely if marriage is to be worth while it's got to be deeply rooted—in the soul as well as the body."

Jane sighed. "It's a queer business! You might loathe a man who happened to be sympathetic with every taste, ideal and aim you had—and be madly in love with one who differed with you at all points."

"I could not be," said Augusta.

"Without passion—deep and fiery emotion—between a man and woman, all other points of contact are uninteresting—especially to a man. Oh, I've learned a lot!"

"Apparently!"

"And of course it's the supreme experience of life—comparable to nothing else!" declared Jane.

"Aside from what you call 'love,' you would warn me against marrying Charles Leiter?" asked Augusta curiously, her eyes not meeting Jane's.

Jane had a feeling that Augusta's tone and manner of speaking of the man were very peculiar. Not frank and open as she usually was about everything.

"I admit that Charles is attractive and interesting, Augusta. I like him a lot. But—"

"But what?"

"Would you be willing—*you*—to live on money gained as the Leiter money is—by exploiting society?"

"But I shall live on it as librarian here employed by Mr. Leiter. And you live on it as the wife of the pastor of the church Mr. Leiter supports. No one in the world to-day can escape living on money gained by exploitation. If that would stop my marrying Charles, I might as well declare for a life of celibacy at once. I'd always insist, no matter whom I married, upon earning my own living from society anyway. I'd never consent to be a parasite. Is his wealth your only objection to him as a husband for me? He has never offered himself, but that's a mere detail of course."

"Of course. He's bound to in time. Your followers all do, don't they? No, I've another objection. Charles impresses me as being much too determined a person to make an endurable husband for a modern girl. He is almost as dominating as his great parent. He ought to marry a wife that would be thrilled at being dominated! *You* wouldn't be! You'd do some dominating yourself and Charles would balk. No, Gussie dear, it wouldn't work."

"My gracious!" breathed Augusta almost speechless with astonishment. "*You* warning any one against a domestic tyrant!—in the face of the things you submit to!"

"Oh, well, Robert's a Scotchman," said Jane evasively and quite illogically. "And," she added, rather hastily shifting the subject, "there's that awful mother-in-law you'd have!—Oh, Gussie!" she cried in consternation as she saw the effect of her words—for Augusta suddenly turned white. "I didn't know you really cared for him so much—you declared you would not marry him. And anyway you wouldn't be marrying his family; and the very worst member of it is his step-mother—not even his blood relation. You surely would not let his family stand in the way of your happiness."

Augusta, instantly recovering herself, laughed—a little hysterically, Jane thought.

"No—of course not—if I really cared for him. But if the Leiters are, as you say, so common—"

"Except Charles," Jane hastily inserted.

"Is Charles' step-mother so much worse than they are?"

"Oh, yes, entirely different. You see, the Leiters are eminently respectable—while *she* is—or was—disreputable. A divorcée three times. The loudest, coarsest woman I've ever met!"

Augusta buried her face in her flowers a moment before she answered. "Charles has told me about his step-mother—prepared me for 'the horror she is'—in his eyes at least!"

"No wonder he thinks her 'a horror!' Why, Augusta, his father became infatuated with her while Charles' own

mother was still living and it broke his mother's heart and led to her death. While she was ill and dying his father brought that woman into his own home and 'caoused with her,' the people say. Charles' sister, Mrs. Renzheimer, told me that when only four months after their mother's death, Charles received, at the law college where he was studying, an invitation to the marriage of his father to this disreputable woman, he sent a telegram to the bride—

"‘OWING TO THE RECENT DEATH OF MY MOTHER I AM UNABLE TO ATTEND THE WEDDING.’"

"I know Charles bitterly resents her," said Augusta gravely, "and stays away from Leitersville as much as possible to avoid any contact with her. Does your Leitersville society accept her?"

"It does now. I'm told, though, that it held off a good while, in spite of Mr. Leiter's impregnable position here."

"Is it a matter of common knowledge in Leitersville—the Leiter domestic mess?"

"Everything the Leiters do is common knowledge in Leitersville."

"And lots that they don't do, I suppose," Augusta shrugged.

"Oh, of course. Still, they're not what you could, by any stretch of imagination, call a secretive family! Their most private domestic affairs are being constantly aired before the public. Mrs. Leiter squanders money so frightfully as to strain even Mr. Leiter's enormous means and as he is a frugal Pennsylvania Dutchman, he

rages about her recklessness so loud that we all hear him!"

"Poor Charles!" exclaimed Augusta involuntarily—and Jane's sensitive ear detected in her tone the faintest touch of her characteristic irony.

"You may well say 'Poor Charles!' I think Mrs. Leiter is the only person I've ever known that makes me feel stand-offish and exclusive and Pharisaical—'I am holier than thou!'"

To this Augusta offered no response.

"And she tells it about everywhere that her step-son is going to marry her own daughter!" added Jane.

"*What!*"

"Ah, that stabs, doesn't it! You do care for him, Augusta dear! Well, then, you'd better hurry up and marry him, for I assure you Madam Leiter is a very enterprising and determined woman and *she* says her daughter is so irresistibly charming that Charles has only to see her! I think Charles himself has a deadly fear of her determination and stays away from home as much to avoid the daughter as the mother!"

"Has she—the daughter—ever been here? Has Charles ever met her?" Augusta asked rather breathlessly.

"No, his sister, Mrs. Renzheimer, told me that none of them have ever met her; she's never been in Leitersville since the marriage—that's three years ago."

"Where does she keep herself?"

"Her mother gives it out that she is studying art in New York."

"Studying art!"



"She sounds like a myth, doesn't she?" suggested Jane.

"Rather," agreed Augusta.

"Does Charles think she's a myth—or a menace?" asked Jane.

"I think he feels quite capable, under all circumstances, of defending himself!" shrugged Augusta. "You know," she added with a strange little laugh that seemed to Jane irrelevant, "it was Charles who recommended me to his father for this library position!"

"Why is that amusing, dear?"

"Well—oh, well,—Mr. Leiter did not know he was employing a possible daughter-in-law, you see!"

"That would not worry him so much as knowing that he had employed a radical—or whatever they call people who don't think our government is heaven on earth! If he finds out you're *that!*"

"*When* he finds out I'm *that!*"

"You won't hold your job here, dear, if you're not cautious!"

"But as Mr. and Mrs. Leiter are in Europe just now, I suppose I can manage to stick until they come back. That's why Charles is coming home for a while—because Mr. and Mrs. Leiter are away."

"Oh, is he to be at home while they are abroad?" asked Jane.

"Yes. He is coming next Saturday."

"This does look serious! But, Augusta—"

"Well?"

"Charles himself isn't a bit radical."

"No."

"Does he know your views?"

"Not all of them!"

"But you thought it so wrong of me not to tell Robert all the deep dark secrets of my heart before I married him—"

"Jane, I'm not in love with Charles and hope I never shall be!"

"Why 'hope'?"

"I'd be awfully misplaced and wasted in a millionaire's family. I am going to *do* something with my life, Jane, if you're not!"

"Why am I not?"

"Tied to that minister how can you? It's worse than being saddled to a millionaire, for *that* would have some compensations! Oh, forgive me, Jane—I'm awfully rude, but—"

"Jane!" called Robert's voice from the lower hall.

Jane dashed out to the landing. "Yes, Robert?" with a rising inflection.

"Come down, my dear. I want you."

"Yes, Robert," with a falling inflection. She turned back to her guest. "Will you come down, Augusta?"

"When I've written a letter."

Jane ran down the stairs to her waiting spouse.

## CHAPTER IV

A HALF hour later, strolling downstairs to ask Jane to go out with her to mail her letter, Augusta was arrested halfway down by the sound of rather high-pitched voices coming from the minister's study.

"I'm so tired of a mincing dutiful housewife with her, 'Yes, Robert!'" she heard Mr. Watts exclaim with what sounded to her like derisive laughter.

Augusta stopped short in consternation. Robert actually telling Jane to her face that he was sick and tired of her! No wonder that he *was* of course! What man wouldn't be? But that this should be Jane's reward for all her sacrifice!

Jane was answering, "You aren't more tired of that craven creature than I am! Carrying that heavy tray up-stairs, darning worn-out discarded socks by the hour, running about at your lordly beck and call to fetch and carry for your reverence, seeing Augusta's heavy scorn of my *pu-sallinimus* (*pu-sill-animus*? What is the darned word?) obedience to every lift of your ministerial hand—oh, gee!"

The worm was turning! Augusta's face lit up with relief.

"Rob!" Jane exclaimed—but Augusta, suddenly realizing that she was hearing what was not meant for her ears, moved on downstairs to the study, surprising Robert in the act of gallantly coming to Jane's aid in moving

a chair to the light—the first act of the sort on his part that she had witnessed. But instantly at sight of Augusta he abandoned the chair and seizing a pair of wet shoes that were drying in the sun at the window, he extended them to Jane.

“Here, Jane, blacken my shoes!”

As Jane was about to take the shoes, Augusta, with an impulsive determination to hold her to those rebellious words of a moment ago, and thus help her pull herself out from under the heavy dominance of this man, literally grabbed the shoes from Robert’s hand and hurled them to the floor.

“She shan’t! You must stop making a serf of Jane!” she panted. “Aren’t you ashamed of yourself? You’d better blacken *her* shoes! You’re not worthy of her! You don’t appreciate what she is! You—”

Peals of laughter interrupted her. Jane fell limply into her chair gasping and Robert flung himself prone upon a couch writhing—while both of them shrieked and shouted quite idiotically—Augusta looking on in dazed bewilderment.

“Oh, Gussie!” cried Jane when she could get her breath. She rose, came to Augusta and fell on her neck. “Oh, my dear, we’ve been deceiving you! We’re not what we have seemed—I’m not Robert’s serf, he’s mine! I tyrannize over him ruthlessly! He thinks we are mates, equals, comrades, but ’tis not so, he is my abject slave. Look at his consenting to play this farce with me to make you think he was just the sort of husband you thought he would be! Would even a docile American husband have consented to make himself look such a

back number in these days of women's voting?—and under the eyes of such beauty, grace and intelligence as yours, Augusta? I ask you! But at my command Robert submitted to the undeserved scorn he read in your lovely eyes, to the awful contempt you could not conceal, though we saw your polite efforts.”

“You and he have been playing a farce!”—Augusta seemed unable to take it in.

“Yes, ever since you came! Rob! Run down the cellar and bring up three bottles of ginger ale and we'll drink to the death of your feeble helpmate!”

Robert sprang up obediently and left the room, moping his eyes.

“Then—then you've *not* lost all your ideals, Jane?”

“I assure you, dear, I'm still trying to live ‘on the heights,’ though my bonnie's plaidie shelters me from the chill blasts of such awful superiority as yours and mine, dear! But I still share nearly all your views and I do *not* believe in the emancipation of husbands. Robert has lived in America ten years and is a thoroughly un-emancipated, American spouse.”

“But—but—” breathed Augusta, sinking into a chair, “what was your idea in deceiving me?”

“To pay you back, you wretch, for thinking I *would* marry the sort of man you described all Scotchmen to be! And I thought it would be the most convincing proof I could offer you of your mistake. Why, Augusta, I would not give my Scotchman for any *six* Americans!”

“No one asks you to be a bigamist!”

“You forgive me, Gussie?”

“You'll have to give me time to realize it!—to see

how much I have to forgive! The extraordinary chumminess of a pair that could successfully carry out such a plot! Why, Jane, it suggests a relation just the opposite of what you made me believe you had between you!"

"Yes, we are chummy—within limits of course. I can't tell Robert *everything* I think."

"You can't?"

"Certainly not! But Robert's such a dear, I can afford to stand some things. Here he comes now!" she gaily greeted him as he came into the room bearing a tray of glasses and bottles. "Augusta forgives us, Rob! Fill up the glasses!"

"Good!" cried Robert as he filled their glasses and lifted high his own. "Here's to Woman! Long may she wave! Think, Miss Lawrence!" he added when they were drinking his toast, "what a risk Jane took when she permitted me to relax for a few days from the high American ideal of a husband! I might have acquired the habit of bullying her!"

"There was never," affirmed Jane, "the slightest danger of *that*! Let's give up the ministry, Rob, and go on the stage!"

"It would be much more in *your* line, Jane," said Augusta, "than the ministry!"



## CHAPTER V

**T**HAT night Jane and Augusta sat up very nearly all night talking.

"Even Robert, with his quite orthodox mind and temperament," said Jane plaintively, "is forced to some hypocrisy (he calls it tact) to keep in the good graces of the congregation. But I've got to be 'tactful' not only with the congregation, but with Robert too!"

"What will Robert do, Jane, when he discovers what you really *are*?"

"Have apoplexy!"

"It seems strange to me that you didn't have all that out with him before you were married."

"He never would have married me!"

"You talk like an unprincipled courtesan!"

"Are you familiar with the conversational style of unprincipled courtesans? You surprise me, Augusta!"

"But to have led Robert on to marry you under a false pretense—"

"I didn't really have to lure him on; he fell for me on sight. And I didn't deliberately deceive him. I simply avoided, tactfully, such subjects of discourse as I knew were unsafe. I find that the principle of Safety First is well thought of by the very best of society, especially in the Church. And Robert wooed me so ardently (what *you* would think so primitively) that questions of theological or sociological or political opinions could have

had no more place in his courtship than in that of 'a heathen in his blindness.' Perhaps he, too, was going on the principle of Safety First, for if he had thought it necessary to investigate my opinions before making love to me, such unsentimental caution would naturally have cooled my love."

"And doesn't he even suspect you of not being in perfect harmony with him?"

"He's getting a little warm!"

"And the people of your church—are they getting warm?"

"Not yet. But I'm getting furtive! You see, in Leitersville questions of theology still matter. A social worker here who belongs to our church, an apparently well-educated young woman, I found had never heard in her life that any one except people on Greenland's icy mountains, India's coral strand and Ceylon's Isle had ever questioned the literal authority of that motley collection of various books which she looks upon as *The Book*, one and indivisible. She had chanced upon an old copy of "Robert Elsmere" and she came to the Manse with it in the greatest perturbation and astonishment to ask her pastor about it. He was out, so she told me. Well, it was a case of mutual surprise, for in all my short and simple life I had never before met any literate man or women who had never even *heard* that there were those who questioned whether the Bible was a literary composition by God!"

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her she surprised me as much as 'Robert Elsmere' surprised her. I offered her some more books,

but she refused to touch them; would not finish 'Robert Elsmere' and went away looking so white and agitated that I pitied her! She was shocked to her soul at my familiarity with a world of '*un*-belief,' as she calls it, a world she had never suspected of existing; a world that denied the infallibility of a Book and the deity of a Man. Isn't it odd," added Jane, "the way we make a god or a hero of the radicals and revolutionists of history, while we put the brave and sincere radicals and revolutionists of our own day into the penitentiary? Human nature doesn't really seem worth while, does it?"

"Can't we do our part towards making it so?"

"If after Confucius and Plato and Jesus—such teachers—life is what it is to-day, what's the use?"

"Perhaps you are in a position, Jane, to let a little light into this corner of the world called Leitersville?"

"On the contrary, I'm handicapped by being the minister's wife—I'm such a target for criticism."

"Don't you even try to do anything in your church?"

"Not with the adults—it wouldn't be safe! But I've contrived to take over the primary Sunday School where I've eliminated such atrocities as,

" 'Dropping, dropping, dropping, dropping,  
Hear the pennies fall!  
Every one for Jesus—  
He will get them all!'

—but even here I have to go cautiously. The children will ask embarrassing questions, you know. Of course I ought to encourage their questions, but I'm afraid to. There's one bright little boy that is a perfect pest with

his questions about God. To nearly all his questions I have to answer, 'I don't know.' One day he asked me disgustedly, 'Didn't you go to Sunday School when you were a little girl?'—and when I told him I had, he said, 'It's a pity you didn't learn more about God in your Sunday School so you could tell us.' 'You'll have to ask Mr. Watts what you want to know about God,' I said safely. 'Does he know more about God than you do?' he asked. 'Oh, much more,' I assured him. So I am sure he is storing up a lot of questions to put to poor Robert when he gets a chance. One of the questions is, 'Why didn't God make me a man right away while He was about it—why do I have to grow so long before I'm any use?' I hope to be by when he does tackle Robert."

"So far as I can see, Jane, the Church is an enemy to free thought, free discussion and progress; it's nothing but a genteel club; a supporter of those who exploit the public; a mockery of everything Jesus stood for!"

"I've tried so hard," said Jane earnestly, "to find in it something more than that! But I can't, I can't! A few dull, ineffectual or very old people seem still to get from the Church something spiritual—but as a living moral force in the community the Church simply doesn't any longer exist. Why, the Civic Club, the Women's College Club, are more living centers of influence!"

"And if you tried to bring your own particular church into vital touch with the terrible needs of the day?" suggested Augusta.

"We'd jolly soon find ourselves out of a job!"

"Then your lofty and spiritual mission in Leitersville is to hold your job?"

"I don't want to keep the old job! But I've no right to interfere with Robert."

"You won't be able to keep up the farce, Jane! Deception or even secretiveness is too foreign to you. They'll prove a corrosive in your soul which you'll find so intolerable that you'll presently do something wild and desperate! Doesn't Robert, too, feel hampered here?"

"He knows the secret of successful preaching—which is to tell your congregation *exactly what they already think and believe*—putting it in such a way as to flatter their own conceit of themselves. Don't *you* always admire the intelligence of an orator who preaches to you your own cherished convictions?"

"Always," nodded Augusta. "Do you actually attend church regularly?"

"I do," answered Jane as though ashamed of herself. "I only draw the line at prayer meetings."

"Do the services mean *anything* to you?"

"I might make them mean something to me but for the rest of the congregation—the smug, complacent rich, the ladies who hold gold lorgnettes stylishly with their little fingers curled, while they sing,

"Jesus calls me from the worship  
Of the vain world's golden store—"

or perhaps,

"Perish every fond ambition!"

"Fancy seeing, as I do, Mr. Jacob Leiter, your prospective millionaire father-in-law, piously singing,

“‘Counting all earthly gain as loss  
For Jesus and His blessed cross!’

and all the other employers of labor and war profiteers  
and their fur-clad and jeweled women warbling,

“‘For all are brethren, far and wide,  
Since Thou, O Lord, for all hast died.’

or,

“‘I’ll bear the Cross, endure the pain, supported by  
Thy Word.’

The church services seem to mean to these people nothing more real than a soothing habit; a bit of sentimentality; eminent respectability which proclaims, ‘We’re quite all right; the world’s almost all right; let no one raise disturbing questions and doubts. Let us doze on!’”

“If they understood the significance of the words they mouth so glibly about bearing the Cross of their blessed Savior, they’d fight with all their strength against the ‘blessed Savior!’ Against anything approaching a real Christian brotherhood; against any least change that would wipe out their special privileges,” said Augusta.

“I simply can’t stomach the spiritual atmosphere of our church!” declared Jane.

“But do you find no sincerity at all in it? No simple, good people?”

“Of course I do. But they’re mostly weak-minded.”

“They’d have to be,” nodded Augusta, “not to see the irreconcilable disparity between the religion they profess and the unchristian social order in which we live.”

“They can be wonderfully kind when one is in sickness or trouble. But that is not necessarily because



they are Christian members of our church; for two of the best people in this town are our neighbors on either side of us, one a Jewess and the other not a member of any church. Of course I don't mean to say I think our church members are *consciously* hypocritical. The worst you can say of them is that they are not in earnest."

"It seems to me, Jane, that your life here has no significance."

"Significance a-plenty with Robert to live for! Oh, Augusta, I love the very tones of his voice, the shape of his hands, the way his hair falls about his forehead, his broad shoulders, his—"

"But of course you'll get over all that," said Augusta in a matter-of-fact tone, "and then what will be left to you?"

"I'll not get over it!" declared Jane.

"Well, anyway, you're in a false position, Jane!"

"I know I am. But I am happy!"

"I'm afraid, my dear, you are destined to ruin your husband's career!"

"God forbid!"

"The alternative being that his career will ruin you!"

## CHAPTER VI

“**I** REALLY believe Augusta will marry Charles Leiter,” Jane told her husband the first time they were alone after Augusta had left the Manse for the little furnished apartment she had found.

They were in the minister’s study having their after-dinner coffee, Jane in a low-necked blue velvet frock with her hair piled high on her head, looking so pretty, so girlishly sweet, that Robert’s eyes melted with tenderness as his eyes feasted upon her.

“I should think,” he replied, “that Charles were himself too overbearing a character to fancy the regal sort of woman Augusta is. For myself, I fancy, as you are aware, Madam Watts, a simpler, sweeter, gentler type of woman. And in spite of Charles’ veneer of polish, I suspect that in his heart he is rather vulgarly snobbish and purse-proud—though of course he is too much a man of the world and has really too much good taste and good sense to flaunt the fact blatantly—and Augusta, you see, is a self-supporting girl of unknown family. I can’t imagine Charles marrying so unambitiously. He will want to make a dazzling marriage.”

“I’m sure you are right about that,” Jane agreed, surprised to find Robert such an astute observer, “and it would take nothing *less* than Augusta’s charm to outweigh his ambitions. But I am much more in doubt of her than of him. I feel that if I know any least thing

about Augusta she will never consent to marry except very ideally—and her demands will be so much finer and higher, yet so much simpler than Charles' demands—she'll only ask that he be her true mate, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally—”

“God help the man!” murmured Robert—and Jane laughed.

“I only hope,” he added gravely, “that Charles will realize before it is too late what a very troublesome mate she'd be! Her ideas, my dear! Tut, tut!”

“I share most of them!” said Jane courageously.

“Oh, no, you don't. Don't be absurd, my dear!”

“I've always told you you didn't know me, Robert!”

“You make me laugh, Jane! As transparent a child as you, posing as subtly concealing a dark Other Self! There's nothing subtle about you, my love! You're too emotional and impulsive to be subtle.”

“Yes? Aha and so forth! But don't let's talk about me. Safer not to. You might find out something. I really am rather subtle though, Robert. Why, my dear, if I did not *very* subtly conceal from your congregation what I think of them for the most part—that woman who called here this afternoon, for instance—”

“I thought you were admirably patient with her, Jane. It does rub me up the wrong way to have that sort of person—a Pennsylvania Dutch ex-baker's daughter who affects a British accent—condescending to you!”

“I've grown so accustomed to their condescension that I'm scarcely conscious of it,” Jane comforted him. “It wasn't her condescension, but her perfect British accent that outraged me—when I know just what awful

Pennsylvania Dutch her parents and brothers and sisters talk!"

"I think it astonishing the philosophical way you endure that sort of thing, considering the sort of family and the social life you came out from."

"I'm beginning to see, Robert, that to be genuinely democratic one must be well born, the greatest snobs being the new-rich, and snobbery being the very essence of spiritual vulgarity. Better take that down and put it in a sermon. Sounds rather well, don't you think?"

"Doesn't strike me as strictly sermon material—especially for a Leitersville congregation!"

"Especially for the congregation of The Church On The Avenue."

"You're an odd child, Jane! I verily believe you'd prefer to have me be pastor of a church in the slums! Do you know you're not a bit like other people."

"That's nice!"

"Why? Do you like being odd?"

"Why should I want to be like other people? I don't find other people so admirable, do you? To be different seems at least to suggest the possibility of one's being a little worth while!"

"Don't get cynical, my dear," Robert gravely reproved her. "The majority of people, I find, are decent, well-disposed, good."

"You mean the majority of people are conventional, dear."

"Well, naturally. Why shouldn't they be?"

"Why, indeed?" Jane acquiesced safely. "Oh, Robert!" she suddenly broke out, "do you know I sometimes

envy you your opportunity to say things once a week to that congregation of yours!"

"What sort of things?" he asked with an amused tolerance.

Jane's eyes met his for an instant in uncertainty. Then she decided to risk a plunge.

"Here is what I would say the first Sunday I had the chance!"

She rose, her cheeks flushed, her eyes very bright, her hair becomingly tousled about her face. She stood at the coffee table as though at a pulpit.

"Now, Robert, of course this sermon is not impromptu; I've been preaching it in my mind to your congregation ever since I became its co-pastor."

"Well?" urged Robert, eyeing her suspiciously—and Jane began to preach.

"Do you know, my people, that thousands of your fellow-men here in the United States—yes, right here in Leitersville—are living in such conditions that to offer them Christianity would be a mockery? People who live in a slum or a hovel or work in mines or factories all day long, are apt to hear with some bitterness that all men are brethren; that God is the Father of all; that we must love our neighbor as ourself; that we should do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. A sweat-shop worker must find that 'holiness is a difficult thing without oxygen,' as some one has said. We can't look for the beauty of holiness in overcrowded tenements. To make men able and willing to live the Christian life we must first make it possible for them and their children to live a decent human life. We must

remove from them the fear of hunger, the fear of being jobless, give them leisure and freedom for some play and some self-improvement.

"Do you know that a small fraction of the race holds under control all the means of livelihood?—that the rest of the race cannot even work without the consent of these powerful, autocratic owners? Is this a Christian social order? Neither a slave nor a master can be truly a Christian.

"If preying upon others ceased and all men and women worked for their living; if the great luxury and self-indulgence of huge unearned incomes were superceded by a simpler and more wholesome living; if none were overworked and none engaged in feverish pursuit of unusable wealth, then all would have at least a chance of knowing the better and higher things of life. Envy and covetousness would cease and Jesus' ideal for mankind be made possible of realization."

As Jane, rather exhausted, sat down, Robert, from sheer astonishment, remained silent. But after a moment he found his voice.

"I would rest my hope on the benevolence of the individual employer, not on the dangerous experiment of tearing up our social system!" he said, his tone mildly disapproving.

"A benevolent employer may die and be succeeded by a vicious one. Do you think the Christian life *can* be lived under our present social system?"

"What nonsense, my dear! No fundamental changes are at all necessary. In America we have the best social and industrial system in the world!"



"You can say that!—when right here in Leitersville we see how merciless, even murderous, Big Business is towards anything or any individuals or any class that interferes with its profits or its power! And notice this—the forces that do try to block the depredations of Big Business *are not found in the Church!*"

"Oblige me, my dear, by not talking such nonsense outside the safety of this study! You'd ruin me if you talked like that around this town!"

Jane collapsed in her chair, looking as weary as though she had been through a battle. Leaning her elbow on the coffee table and her head on her hand, she stared thoughtfully at her reflection in the silver coffee pot.

"We owe so much to our big business men in America!" continued Robert earnestly. "All our philanthropies, our hospitals, our orphanages, the upkeep of our Christian churches, our missionary work in foreign fields—none of these things could we have without our Rockefellers, our Morgans, our Leiters. Society seems to me to be very ungrateful and unappreciative of the great social services rendered by our philanthropists."

"Yes," said Jane meditatively, "men are not grateful to those who, out of their abundance, toss them a bone. More and more they resent the benevolently philanthropic attitude, Robert, and give their gratitude to those who suffer for them; to those whose gift bears upon it the blood of the Cross; to a Gandhi, a Eugene Debs—"

"Jane!" exclaimed Robert, genuinely distressed, looking incredulously upon his demure young wife at the coffee table who could utter such revolutionary, not to say blasphemous, words. His wife upholding traitors!

"Why do you say what you cannot possibly mean? I can't bear to have my wife talk, or even think, like that! Do be *careful*, my dear!"

Jane, gazing thoughtfully at her reflection in the coffee pot, did not answer.

"I'm very sorry," said Robert, "that Augusta Lawrence has come here to live! I don't at all like her influence upon you!"

"Be comforted, dear—she'll soon work herself out. Leitersville is a very unsafe place for a person like Augusta. Even if she marries Charles they'll probably not settle here, for I don't believe he would live where he would sometimes have to meet his step-mother; and his step-sister, too, when she turns up."

"The step-sister is probably worse than the mother—judging from what Leiter once let drop to me."

"What did he let drop?"

"Oh, a long, bitter complaint about the girl's extravagance; though he sends her a liberal allowance, she's always running up huge debts that he has to settle; and she won't come home to her mother; prefers the whirl of New York; often they don't know for weeks and months where she is; she worries her mother dreadfully."

"And that is the girl whose mother plots to marry her to Charles Leiter! Surely you would prefer Augusta for a wife for him, wouldn't you?"

"Spoiled American types, both of them!" said Robert, shaking his head. "American men do spoil their women awfully!"

"Some Scotchmen," returned Jane, going to his side and lightly kissing his forehead, "are not far behind them."

He, appeased, pulled her down to his knee and folded her to his heart.



## PART II

“HE THAT IS NOT FOR ME IS AGAINST ME.”





## CHAPTER I

**I**T was just two months after Augusta Lawrence had taken up her work as librarian in Leitersville when Mr. Jacob Leiter, owner of the Leitersville Iron Works, political and financial "boss" of the town, Elder of The Church On The Avenue, suddenly and unexpectedly returned from a greatly curtailed European tour, leaving his wife alone in Paris for the remaining month of the time they had planned to be abroad.

In his absence his town had been getting out of hand and the need of his presence had become imperative.

Jane Watts' prediction had proved true—Augusta was stirring things up in Leitersville.

It was about a week after Jacob Leiter's return that the Reverend Robert Watts, at breakfast one morning with his wife, found in the mail at his plate a letter from his principal Elder. The letter being typewritten on Mr. Leiter's office paper, Robert was reminded that his Elder's private secretary was also a member of The Church On The Avenue. Mr. Leiter made membership in the Presbyterian Church and Sunday School a stepping stone to a good job in his office. As the office force was large, this constituted a nice little asset to The Church On The Avenue. The stepping stone was not broad enough, however, to include the large working force of the Iron Works. There was the Mission Chapel which the rich charitable Presbyterians of the city had built on the outer edge of town for the laboring

people—which, for the most part, they refused to attend.

"A letter from Mr. Leiter," announced Robert as he picked it up.

"How's Jake this morning? Offering you a Ford for parish work, I hope, in which I can sport around," said Jane flippantly.

"Let's see—no—"

"I suppose, Robert dear, *he* isn't asking you for Christian counsel in the matter of the impending strike at his Iron Works?—as that laboring man did yesterday?"

"I should hope he'd know how to handle his men without *my* help," said Robert.

"And without God's help, I suppose. Far from coming to you, his pastor, for advice, he tells *you* what you are to do, doesn't he, dear?"

"No man tells me what I am to do, my dear."

"Jacob Leiter *would*, if occasion arose."

"Nonsense, my dear!"

"Robert!" said Jane, regarding her husband with speculation in her guileless, childish gaze, "suppose Mr. Leiter *should* ask you what ought to be his Christian course, as a Christian of your flock, in dealing with his men who want to join the Union—I wonder whether you would say to him what you told that laborer—"

"Naturally not. The cases would be entirely different."

"Entirely," nodded Jane.

"What's in your mind, Jane?"

"When the laborer told you of the 'unrest' of the men under certain obvious injustices and abuses, for which

they could get no hearing without Union pressure, and asked you what, under such conditions, they ought to do, do you remember what you told him?"

"Certainly. What I would inevitably say in such a case. I pointed out to him that many of the things of which he complained were unavoidable, necessary; that some of the things were easily adjustable and would certainly be changed in time if the men would have patience; that Unions meant strikes, which are wasteful, unlawful, unsocial, unchristian, unfair to the public, futile; that he ought to appreciate his luck in having any work at all in this time of unemployment; that he was especially lucky in working for so liberal an employer as Mr. Leiter. I advised him to desist from strife and submit to the will of God."

"You didn't mean the will of God, dear—you meant Jacob Leiter's will."

"Why do you go out of your way, dear, to put unfair interpretations upon what I say and do?" asked Robert, hurt and irritated.

"But, dear, would you say to Mr. Leiter, 'Desist from strife and submit to the will of God?'—or would you say, 'You must be firm in maintaining the divine rights of Property?'"

"I'd tell him his property was a trust from God; that he was God's steward, accountable to God for his just administration of his worldly goods."

"But, my dear, why don't you say to the laborer, 'Be firm and do not falter in maintaining the divine rights of labor and of your manhood; be strong in your insistence upon justice and freedom?'"

"Because the laborer is constantly over-reaching those rights. Give him the little finger—"

"Yes, yes—and capitalists don't over-reach? They are satisfied with the little finger? Oh, Robert, dear, you're so—oh, well," sighed Jane, giving it up, "read me J. L's. letter."

"I wish Augusta Lawrence would stop spoiling you!" frowned Robert.

"It isn't Augusta, dear. It's me—I. Do read your letter."

Robert picked up the letter, but as he was about to read it aloud, an exclamation from Jane, to whom the maid had just handed the morning *Gazette*, made him glance up inquiringly.

"Will you look at this!" she cried breathlessly, holding up the newspaper for him to see the large head-lines.

"FORTY PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS DROPPED  
FROM THE FORCE

At Last Night's Meeting Of The Board"

Robert read aloud. "What for?" he asked puzzled.

Jane glanced hastily down the column of the paper. "No reason given, but I know. A number of the teachers joined the American Federation of Teachers which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It brought Jacob Leiter straight home from Europe! He's had them all discharged!"

"He's not a school director."

"He tells the school directors what they're to do, however."

"Now, Jane, how can you know that?"

"Don't you know that all winter the teachers have been beseeching the school board in vain for higher salaries to meet the high cost of living?—which is so high they can't save enough to live on during the summer vacation. Mr. Jacob Leiter, the prop and pillar of our church, our benevolent philanthropist, wrote to the president of the school board telling him that the teachers' demands *must not be voted upon until June*—when it would be too late, you see, for the teachers to secure other positions."

"Now how do you *know* that Leiter wrote that to the school board president, Jane?"

"Charles Leiter told Augusta. She at once suggested to some of the more enterprising teachers that, seeing they had no other way to help themselves, they should form a local Federation of Teachers."

"Why should she interfere in a matter like that which doesn't concern her?"

"The public schools concern every citizen, don't they, dear?"

"If she works against Leiter, her own employer, how can she expect to hold the library position?"

"She doesn't expect to hold it long."

"And does she expect to hold Charles' devotion when she acts against his father?"

"You know Charles' cynical attitude—he looks on amused—as he would look at a game—seeing Augusta matched against his powerful dad!"

"Augusta seems to be gaining a very unfortunate and disturbing influence in this town, my dear!"

“‘Disturbing’ is what she wants it to be!”

“Which is abominably bad taste and presumptuously egotistic in an outsider coming in! It is a pity you proposed her for membership in the Civic Club where she is deliberately trying to undermine the influence of the Club’s president, Mrs. Renzheimer, her own employer’s daughter and the sister of the man who is presumably courting her! Has she no sense of prudence and propriety?”

“‘Prudence and propriety?’ Awful words, when you come to think of it, aren’t they, dear? Cloaks for rottenness very often. Augusta is not *trying* to undermine Mrs. Renzheimer—Augusta’s mere existence in Leitersville would have a powerful tendency to counteract Mrs. Renzheimer’s influence.”

“Mrs. Renzheimer’s influence,” Robert maintained, “is always on the side of what is good and stable and sound.”

“Good, stable, sound things like God, Home and Country—keeping home fires burning, a hundred per cent. cheery morning smiles! Her kind of sloppy influence needs to be undermined, Robert!”

“How in two months’ time an unknown, self-supporting girl could have come in here and have gained the position and power Augusta has gained—”

“Isn’t it remarkable?” Jane cried with irrepressible pride in her friend. “That the charm and force of her personality should be too strong for even such intrenched power as Mrs. Renzheimer’s!—who, by the way, is very resentful that her autocracy has been challenged!”

“Augusta actually has this town divided against it—



self!" said Robert ruefully, "with half the foolish women following anywhere she leads!"

"And the other half tagging along after Mrs. Renzheimer!" said Jane with relish, breathing a sigh of satisfaction in the dramatic situation which her husband so deprecated.

"And yet," said Robert, genuinely puzzled, "Augusta is hoping to marry the heir to the Leiter millions!"

"I don't know that she's actively 'hoping,' though I'm sure Charles is. Mrs. Renzheimer scorns the idea of her 'exclusive, fastidious brother' (her words) having any 'serious ideas' in his constant attentions to Augusta. But every one else thinks he is crazy about her. I am quite sure, Robert, that even if she had not been sponsored here by Charles and me, she would have done just as much for herself without us. She's a natural magnet, a born leader."

"If only she used her power constructively, as Mrs. Renzheimer does, instead of destructively!"

"Have you ever noticed, dear, that you've got to dig a hole before you can build a house? To think," added Jane, smiling, "that this unknown hireling of the great Jake has forced him to come all the way from Europe!"

"And," added Robert frowning, "has caused forty good teachers to lose their positions! Forty! Why, there are only ninety in the town and good teachers are so scarce! Think of the disorganization and the harm to the pupils!"

"But Augusta didn't discharge the teachers! My gracious, Robert, why don't you blame your Elder? Why did he discharge them?"

"Well, to be sure, there is an important principle involved," began Robert, "and for my part—"

"I should say there is!" exclaimed Jane.

"Public servants have no business joining a labor union that represents only a portion of the public. The school board was justified in refusing to employ teachers who would be under any other control than the board, the duly elected representatives of the whole public."

"Postal clerks were given the right by Congress to join the American Federation of Labor."

"Teachers on strike will disrupt the schools worse than their dismissal and replacement by others will do."

"But, Robert, Augusta says that all Federations of Teachers sign an agreement not to go on strike; and I know that there are branches of the Federation of Teachers at many leading colleges. Some of the best educators of the country approve of it. They say the teachers' influence in the Federation of Labor is to curb the unwise actions of illiterates, making the American Federation of Labor both saner and more effective."

"What do they hope to gain if they may not strike?"

"The Labor vote to elect a new school board not bound to Mr. Jacob Leiter! A board pledged to raise their salaries and make some other needed reforms in the schools for which the teachers have asked in vain these many years. Oh!"

Jane's eyes had fallen upon another item in the newspaper. "What's this?"

"'AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHRISTIAN PASTORS AND TO THE Y. W. C. A. AND THE Y. M. C. A. OF LEITERSVILLE.'"

"It's signed 'THE LEITERSVILLE EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION.' "

"That's what this letter from Leiter is about," said Robert quickly. "Let me read it first."

He picked up the several typed sheets and read aloud:—

"*Rev. Watts,*

"DEAR PASTOR, You will see in Tuesday's *Gazette* the Open Letter drawn up by our Employers' Association of Leitersville, telling our local pastors that if our churches desire and expect the continued financial and moral support of the substantial people of this city, their ministers must confine themselves in their sermons and other public addresses to a neutral zone on all such questions as Labor and Capital, the Open Shop, the expulsion from our schools of those unwise teachers who have joined the Federation of Teachers, and upon all other matters which are not properly any concern of the ministry, whose duty it is to preach the Gospel and let business to men of business. Our Employers' Association represents the backbone of this city and without its support what becomes of the churches? And why should the employers of Leitersville support churches or other organizations which would take sides against the employers' interests?

"Now I am writing to assure you, Rev. Watts, that of course our Open Letter is not aimed at such ministers as you (who know on which side your friends are) but at such as Rev. Calloway of St. Mark's Episcopal Church who as you know is always attacking the business interests of Leitersville—what he calls "exposing our town's corruption"—overlooking that here's where he earns his bread and butter. It is to put a stop once and for all to his seditious

preaching and talking against what he calls "capitalistic abuses and bossism" (matters entirely outside the Church's jurisdiction) that we have written and published our Open Letter. It's got to be a fight to a finish—the finish of Calloway's bad influence in Leitersville.

"If he attempts to defend the teachers that our school board sees fit to discharge, or to criticize our Open Letter, I know I can depend on you, Rev. Watts, to exercise a counter-acting influence. Calloway, as rector of a church whose financial standing is second only to our own, does have some influence, though his more prominent members are all leaving him and some of them are coming over to us. He's done *that* much for us. And nothing but harm to himself thru his mischievous meddling in matters that do not concern the ministry. Leave them stick to their own job if they want our support.

"Yours in Christ,  
"Jacob Leiter."

Robert looked up to see Jane's delicate face flushed and her soft eyes burning.

"His low-minded idea of what your job *is*! His contemptuous opinion of ministers!" she gasped.

"I'd hardly say 'low-minded,' " Robert protested. "Or 'contemptuous.' "

Jane's burning eyes met his in an eloquent silence, for she could not trust herself to answer.

"You use such extravagant terms, Jane dear!"

"What terms would you use, dear, to describe Mr. Leiter's idea of your job?"

"Crude, rather than 'low-minded.' "

"Why split hairs? How shall you answer that insulting letter, Robert?"

"Insulting? How insulting?"

"How? You are offered a bribe for your silence!"

"My dear!" exclaimed Robert irritably, "you distort things so unreasonably! Bribe for my silence! We are simply asked to be neutral on subjects which are not strictly our province."

"What is strictly your province, my dear?"

"It is certainly not the province of ministers to meddle with definite political, economic and industrial issues."

"Politics and industry, then, are human activities to which the Christian Gospel is irrelevant?" asked Jane. "It is 'meddling' for ministers to apply Christian principles to industry?"

"Very few of the clergy are qualified to speak wisely on those subjects," said Robert.

"So it would seem!"

"Therefore they should let them alone."

"I notice, though, that you and Mr. Leiter don't call it 'meddling' when you speak for instead of against the capitalistic side of industry. You didn't call the Church's whole-hearted activities for the War 'meddling in public matters which are none of their concern'—did you, dear? Were the churches 'confining themselves to preaching the Gospel' when they supported wholesale slaughter?"

"The War was a great Christian Crusade against tyranny!"

"And now tyranny is dead!" murmured Jane.

Robert ignored this. "Could the Church have seen civilization threatened as it was and not have got into the fight to save it?"

"It could not have been the danger to civilization that made the Church fight. It had seen civilization threat-

ened by corrupt governments and Imperialism and industrial warfare and by the exploiting of the masses and by slums in great cities—and it had not, except in isolated cases, raised its voice. When it comes to danger to civilization, what is more dangerous to it than war itself?”

“We fought to end wars,” said Robert conclusively, and added testily, “It’s the Reverend Mr. Calloway’s influence that has precipitated upon us the embarrassment that this Open Letter presents to every minister in Leitersville. Mr. Leiter warned me when I first came here to have no dealings with Calloway; that he was doing a lot of mischief in the town. Why, he has every business man in Leitersville against him!”

“Would you say he has Jesus Christ against him?”

“Don’t be frivolous, my dear!”

“Frivolous?”

“That irreverent way you have of speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ—as you’d speak of a mere man!—I dislike it excessively! As for Calloway, he is fanatical!”

“I’ve never seen him,” said Jane, “but from what I hear of him, I think he does seem to take his Christianity seriously.”

“Not more than all the rest of us take it. Only we aren’t sensational and theatrical about it.”

“It seems to me that the next logical step of the Employers’ Association will be to write your sermons for you!”

“You know perfectly well that I should never allow any one to dictate to me as to how I should preach!”



"Write that to Mr. Jacob Leiter!" cried Jane. "Do, dear!"

"I can be quite as effectual without being aggressive and tactless. By alienating him I should simply lose all power to influence him for good."

"I'm glad to hear you think he is needing to be influenced for good!"

"Naturally I think him a bit materialistic. But what would this town be without him? What would become of its charities, its free library, its public play-ground, its leading church and Mission, its hospital, its industries from which three-fourths of the population draw a living? Think what Leitersville owes to Jacob Leiter!"

"Think what Jacob Leiter owes to Leitersville!—all his wealth and security and power!"

"But he has earned it all! A man that has built up a community like this is its benefactor."

"It seems to be the function of the Church," said Jane hopelessly, "to cast upon all the activities of its rich supporters the odor of sanctity!"

"You are becoming cynical, Jane, like Augusta!"

"Robert, why don't you help Mr. Calloway in his brave fight against Mr. Leiter's corrupt rule here?"

"I don't call it corrupt. Far from it. Mr. Leiter has made the town what it is."

"Yes, what it is."

"And he will save it from misguided people like Mr. Calloway and Augusta Lawrence that would put the riff-raff in power!"

"The riff-raff are in power. I'd call the writers of that Open Letter riff-raff of the most dangerous type!"

"You misuse words!"

"What are you going to write to Mr. Leiter, Robert?"

"I shall tell him that I must do my duty as I see it; that he may rest assured I shall not only not sanction any radical proceedings in the Church or out of it, but shall do what I can to hold in check all such movements; that I must nevertheless be free to act as my conscience dictates; that though I consider Mr. Calloway a fine, earnest, devoted Christian, I do not often find myself agreeing with him because he sees things out of proportion and goes to extremes."

Jane gazed at her husband in mingled sorrow and admiration. "What a wonderful criminal you would have made, Robert! You are so (excuse me) slick!"

Robert looked at her across the table with a light in his eyes that made her heart sink; it was a look of actual dislike.

"Not that I think you mean to be," she hastened to reassure him. "That's why I can't understand your mental make-up, Robert—I can't make out whether you are tremendously clever or simply stupid! That letter you will write to Jacob Leiter is a masterpiece!"

"If it is a matter of any importance to you to keep my respect and—and love, Jane—I would suggest that you leave me to manage my own profession in my own way. If I were a weak man, your influence would destroy my power for usefulness! It would ruin my career! My problems are stiff enough without your complicating them by your always inimical attitude towards the rich, charitable men who make my work possible. Why can't you be sympathetic with what I am trying to do?"

"That's what I am trying to be, dear. And your 'problems' would be quite simple if you didn't let self-interest come in. Christian principles are not complicated. What stand shall you take about the discharged teachers?"

"Why should I take a stand about them? I am not on the school board."

"A great public wrong has been done, Robert."

"I'm not sure of that. The school directors probably know their business."

"They know Mr. Leiter's business."

"Nonsense! It's absurd to suppose that all those men are bought!"

"Any more absurd than that *you* are bought, Robert? A word against Mr. Leiter's autocratic methods and no more funds for the Church, says that Open Letter!"

"Which you wilfully misunderstand when you offensively call it bribery! In this matter of the teachers I am inclined to agree with Mr. Leiter's 'autocratic policies.' For public school teachers no partisanship!"

"Doesn't it depend upon which side the partisanship takes? If as a body the men teachers had affiliated with the Leitersville Men's Club, wouldn't they be likely to hear more partisan talk there than in the halls of labor?"

"It is perfectly obvious, Jane, that the public schools are not a proper sphere of operation for the American Federation of Labor."

"Neither are they a proper sphere of operation for political leaders like Jake Leiter!"

"Don't you see, Jane, that a teacher's thinking should not be warped by propaganda of Labor Unions?—that

teachers should be free to explain with an unbiased mind American institutions and government?"

"Free? Are they free to explain how the principles of American institutions and government are violated by the workings of the capitalistic system?—by boss-ruled school boards, for instance? It seems that by becoming a teacher one sacrifices the right to express or even to *have* any opinions whatsoever on social or political questions! That's what Capitalism is doing to education in America!"

"Will you consider for a moment, my dear, what Capitalism has done for the world?—built all its railroads, telephones, telegraph lines, bridges, hospitals, art galleries, homes for the afflicted and helpless, colleges and schools!—Well?" he demanded as she was silent. "What have you to say?"

"That that's a lie, my love!"

"Prove it!"

"Capital and Labor built them."

"No, Capital simply bought Labor. You don't see anything!"

"Yes, dear, that's the way I am—I never see such things!"

"What would mere Labor accomplish without the Capitalist's brains and initiative?"

"The laborers could buy brains and initiative as theatrical managers do—they buy Bernard Shaw's plays and John Barrymore's histrionic genius."

"Isn't it the capitalist that fills the laborer's dinner pail?"

"And yours and mine, too, dear? But when the la-

borer stops working, the capitalist stops accumulating.”

“You’re just like the laboring class, Jane—they’d bite off the hand that feeds them!”

“Would you prefer that they’d lick the hand of Capitalism? If only ministers would do some biting of hands that feed them!” sighed Jane. “Robert, your capitalist would say to the laborer, ‘Submit to me and eat. Rebel against me and starve.’ No, it is not the capitalist that fills the laborer’s dinner pail—it is the laborers that load the capitalist’s table with delicacies (no dinner pail for the capitalist.) It is the laborers that fill his home with comforts, luxury and beauty and stack his garage (far finer than the laborer’s home) with cars and build at his command the hospitals, asylums, art galleries, for which the capitalist gets all the credit!”

“But the capitalist’s money paid for them,” argued Robert with what he sincerely thought sound logic and ethics. “I wish, my dear, you tried to be more thoughtful—less shallow!”

“Robert, have Christian ministers *no* help to offer for corrupt governments and industrial autocracy and unlimited power in the hands of men who administer it without heart or conscience but only with greed?”

“Don’t you know, Jane, that people don’t go to church to hear these sordid themes discussed? They want to hear God speak through the mouth of His prophet on themes that lift them above the world—they don’t want to be dragged through mire!”

“We’re *living* in the mire! Why doesn’t the Church help to pull us out?”

“If you are cherishing the illusion,” said Robert

coldly, "that you can do my thinking for me, Jane, get over it."

"I'm sure I could do it for you a lot better than Mr. Jacob Leiter and the Employers Association can, my dear!"

Robert, looking offended, rose and gathered up his mail to leave the room. But at the door he paused, turned about and came over to Jane's chair.

"My dear," he pleaded with her, his big bulk bending over her, "be with me, not against me! I need you!"

"Darling, I'll be with you till the last gasp if you will be with your own Christianity, not against it!"

Robert, impatient, exasperated, turned away and strode to the door. But again on the threshold he paused for a last word. "Understand, Jane, if your intimacy with Augusta Lawrence is going to jeopardize my position here, weaken my influence and usefulness, it will have to be *dropped!*"

"But if she becomes Jake Leiter's daughter-in-law, I must not drop her?" inquired Jane with her look of innocence which Robert was beginning to recognize was a mere cloak for subtle guile.

"Leiter would disinherit Charles before he'd consent to his marrying a woman like that! And I insist that Charles," said Robert, "is quite too much of a Leiter (in spite of all his 'elegance' and 'culture') to let love weigh more with him than ambition!"

"He's mad about Augusta, though!"

"You'll see, however, that he won't marry her!" Robert threw over his shoulder as he went away.



## CHAPTER II

**A**S Jane, depressed and listless, was about to leave the dining room, the Pennsylvania Dutch maid came in from the kitchen to make the announcement dreaded of housekeepers.

"I'm quittin' soon, Missus."

Jane concealed her consternation. "Oh, are you?" she asked with an affected and dramatic cheerfulness. "Soon?"

"Well, not till a month or so."

"Don't I suit—doesn't the place suit you, Lizzie?" she hastily amended her question.

"Och, I like it here good enough—that I do. You're an awful sweet lady—that you are. But I'm betterin' myself."

"Some one offering you better wages?"

"Well, I guess! I'm gettin' sixty-five a month and Sa'rdays and Sundays off."

"Why, Lizzie, no family in Leitersville pays such wages."

"It ain't to a family I'm hirin' myself. I wouldn't leave you to go to no other woman, Missus. You're too nice a lady to work for—that you are. I'm goin' to school teach."

"Teach school!" exclaimed Jane in astonishment.

"Yes'm. You see, Pop's a school director and he says they'll be awful scarce of school teachers in Leitersville for next September, after firing out the forty teachers

last night that joined to the Federation of Teachers. So they'll be pickin' up teachers wherever they can handy, and Pop says he can easy get me elected."

Jane sank limply into the nearest chair. "But, Lizzie, don't you have to pass a teachers' examination and get a certificate before you can teach?"

"Yes, but Pop's a ward politician and him and Mr. Jake Leiter'll fix that up for me. Mr. Leiter's a good friend of Pop's and he told Pop I could easy pass, I got such a good handwrite."

"Perhaps," said Jane seriously, "one of the expelled teachers would come here and take *your* place!"

"Well, I guess a-plenty of 'em'll be glad to get any work they *can* get!"

"Do you feel qualified to teach school, Lizzie?"

"Well, you see, Missus, I went to school till I was ready for High School, so I'm pretty good educated; and all I got to teach is tables up to six times— and writin' penmanship—and readin' up to the third reader. I'd have to be awful dumb if I couldn't do that much; ain't? A cinch, I'll say! And I'm so fond of kids, I get along with 'em good. Lucky for me the teachers joined the Federation; ain't?"

"Perhaps you don't begin to know how lucky for you," said Jane enigmatically.

"I never had a good time yet in all my life," said Lizzie. "I always had to work and save and help other ones. But now for once I'll *have* a little. I and my little girl we can live by ourselves for once."

"I didn't know you had a child, Lizzie. You never said you were married."

Lizzie turned very red and looked confused. "Och," she said, her eyes downcast, "that's the time I spoke too quick!"

"How old is your little girl?"

"Seven goin' on eight."

"You look young to be the mother of a child of seven. Where is she?"

"By my Mom's out on Saur Kraut Hill."

"It *will* be nice if you can make a home for her and yourself alone. Is your husband dead?"

"No—yes—I don't remember—och, I mean I ain't got one—I—I wasn't ever goin' to tell you, Missus," said Lizzie tearfully, "but I'm an unmarried mother! I got caught when I was only sixteen a'ready. Now I guess you won't keep me another day!" she faltered, wiping her eyes with her apron.

"It will make no difference to me, Lizzie," Jane hastened to reassure her. "It's none of my business. It's your own affair—"

She paused as the question flashed upon her, "Then why are the capitalistic abuses of Leitersville—the dismissal of the teachers—my affair?"—and she realized that while it was an impertinence to meddle with your neighbors' private relations, the public acts of any one in a community, were every one's concern. But this was just the reverse of Robert's belief. He held that he had nothing to do with the public morality, only with the individual soul. Jane rather believed he would want her to discharge Lizzie if he were told this thing about her—though Robert was never hard; always kind and sympathetic with the erring and the poor; incapable of cruelty;

not puritanic or self-righteous in his judgments. His people loved and respected him. He had not an enemy in Leitersville.

"Ain't you *pertikkler*, then, Missus?" asked Lizzie, in a tone of great relief.

"I'm not qualified to judge of your case, Lizzie, and I've no desire to."

"You must have had some awful experiences of your own if you're *that* easy!" was Lizzie's unexpected and embarrassing conclusion.

"No, Lizzie," Jane smiled, "I do think it regrettable that your child is fatherless. Do you think you can manage to keep house and take care of your little girl when you are teaching school?" she asked, marveling at Lizzie's idea of the "cinch" school-teaching was.

"Och, yes, Janie ain't no bother; she's big enough to be a help to me."

"Janie is her name? You must bring her to see me some time."

"Her right name's Meely, but since I worked for you I call her Jane. Och, now mebbly you won't like that, seein' I had her single-wise!"

"No, I am very much complimented at your calling her after me, Lizzie."

"Well, anyhow, she's an awful nice little girl and it's goin' to be awful nice having her to myself in our own home, for the first time since she was born a'ready. Mom's got so many of her own she can't bother with mine yet, so Janie she don't get raised nice and *pertikkler* like I want her raised. Yes, in my own house I can be my own boss. You see, I'm not boss in Mom's

house, but I am boss in *my* house. You must know *where* you're boss. And I want a chance once to use the furniture I collected a'ready, looking to the time when Janie would be big enough that mebbby I and her *could* house-keep together. I got two chairs that cost me thirty dollars yet! Yes, mind if they didn't! And I want to *enjoy* them chairs once! And I got such an oil-painting hand-painted, that I bought off an agent for six dollars. The subjeck is *Nature's Jewels*. The pitcher ain't just so clear, but the frame is awful good."

Jane wondered, as she went about her household tasks that morning, whether all the forty vacancies in the schools would be filled by applicants like poor Lizzie; and her heart burned against the unscrupulous powers that could so injure the children they had in their keeping.

### CHAPTER III

**B**EFORE the day was over Leitersville was in a mad ferment of excitement over the summary dismissal of the teachers without warning. Nothing in the history of the town had ever so stirred it. The school board had not foreseen that their drastic action would create a turmoil that was destined to last many months, to shake the town to its moral foundations and to do more for the cause of labor than propaganda could have accomplished in years. Nothing else was talked of—on the streets, in the shops, at the clubs, at parties, in offices, wherever two or three were gathered together, there was the school teacher question in the midst of them.

Charles Leiter who, in spite of his superior education and the cynicism on which he rather prided himself, was not without a certain awe of his powerful, though crude, father, hoped fervently that the origin of the disturbance would not be traced back to Augusta as its instigator and to him as her informant about his father's letter to the school board president.

That there was a great deal of feeling for the teachers' side, much more than was openly expressed, was evident. The majority, however, some from policy, some from conviction, were against the teachers; and the reasons they advanced were sometimes amusing, sometimes grotesque, seldom convincing.



"When it comes to any plan that's not one hundred per cent. American I'm against it!" the "loyal citizen" would affirm.

"It's very un-American for a bunch of teachers to try to force things!"

"I surely won't favor sending my children to any teacher that seeks to veneer over her un-Americanism by joining the American Federation of Labor!"

"We'll not stand for taking the American flag down from the staff on top of the school house, you can bet!"

On the teachers' side one could hear:—

"Are forty of the most competent teachers of Leitersville to be deprived of their livelihood because of Mr. Jacob Leiter's prejudice against Labor Unions?"

"Threats to punish workers of any class because they organize for self-protection are not very popular these days!"

"These teachers are fighting for their very existence, their honor, their self-respect, their independence, as free American citizens and not as chattels of a boss-ridden school board."

"There's never been a teachers' strike where the American Federation of Teachers was established, and there have been many strikes among non-federated teachers."

It was rather early in the morning, two days later, that the maid at the Manse, having answered a ring at the front door, came to Jane in the dining room and announced, to her startled surprise, "Reverend Calloway to see our Reverend, Missus."

The Episcopal rector who caused Mr. Leiter so much perturbation!

Jane, feeling a thrill of excitement, went to Robert's study to tell him.

"Calloway here!" he repeated in a tone of mingled annoyance and consternation, for he had an uneasy realization that the young rector was a force to be reckoned with. "To worry me to death about these secular affairs which are none of our concern! Look here, Jane, I don't want to talk to Calloway this morning. I want to think over these matters more thoroughly before I discuss them with him or any one."

He snatched up his hat. "I'll go over to the church-study—have Lizzie tell him I'm not at home."

He had gone before Jane could offer a comment.

She thoughtfully considered the situation a moment. "I'll see Mr. Calloway," she decided.

She had a lively curiosity as to this clergyman whom all Leitersville was constantly discussing; sometimes adversely, sometimes with enthusiastic admiration and affection. She knew that he was young and unmarried; a man of apparently great earnestness and sincerity; of an unworldly indifference to his fate whenever he was forced to choose between his own welfare and the principles of the Master in whose name he worked—such a rarity in a modern clergyman as to be considered a strange eccentricity; that he encouraged the poor as well as the rich to join his congregation; that he had been fighting almost alone during the whole two years of his life in Leitersville against what he called "the infernal boss rule" of the town, a rule which the rest of the citizens accepted as complacently as they did the fresh air and sunshine. His wealthy members, it was said,

were determined to get rid of him and many were leaving the church.

"He would be a law unto himself!" they said.

As Jane went into the parlor just now and introduced herself, she saw a tall, thin young man with sharply outlined features and a keen, intelligent countenance that was a bit stern except when he smiled. His smile seemed to break up the severity of his face into the most genial kindliness. His musical accent, so different from that of Leitersville Pennsylvanians, and his ease of manner, reserved though interested, made him seem an exotic in this locality. But the thing about him which impressed Jane poignantly and instantly, which she felt in the very atmosphere of his presence, was his genuineness.

She had a passing wonder as to how the Church could hold a man who looked so honest and intelligent—followed instantly by a remorseful pang for the disloyalty to Robert inherent in such a thought.

She was surprised to find her heart throbbing as he held her hand and for an instant searched her face—not at all as though he expected to see there that sympathy with his attitude towards life which he so rarely found in Leitersville, but rather as though to gauge the extent of the antagonism he must meet in this house of his strongest opponent next to Mr. Leiter; strongest, perhaps, for the very reason that the Reverend Mr. Watts was not openly aggressive to the rector's crusade, but simply held himself aloof from it with the excuse, "The time is not yet ripe. We cannot force these issues. Our work is first to build up Christian character and then

all these questions will solve themselves as snow melts under the warm sun."

But apparently something in Jane's clinging clasp of his hand and in the expression of her beautiful shadowy eyes made him know at once, with a flash of pleased surprise, that here he would find understanding.

"Mr. Watts isn't here—may I take his place, Mr. Calloway?" she asked.

"Not his, but your own, which will be much better. I've called to ask Mr. Watts what he expects to do," he at once stated his errand without preliminaries, as they sat down, his speech incisive, his manner crisp, "about the threat which the Employers' Association is holding over the heads of the ministers. We ministers are being warned, as of course you know, Mrs. Watts, by our 'Captains of Industry,' that we must stop meddling with industrial conditions; and they even threaten us with a definite punishment, the withdrawal of their financial support, if we disregard their warning. How are we going to meet this challenge? The ministers, it seems to me, must act as a body in this matter. That's what I want to discuss with Mr. Watts."

"Do you think that this Open Letter was a time-bomb set to go off at the same time that the teachers were discharged?" asked Jane.

"It looks like that. Do you know that the expelled teachers have been told that the moment they resign from the Federation they will get back their positions?—the same sort of bribery that is held out to the ministers! Conscription of consciences!"

"And the teachers who don't resist that," said Jane

warmly, "who yield, will be the servile and inferior ones, unfit to be placed over young people—while those who stand firm for their freedom and their ideals will be kept out!—and the school children will be the losers!"

Mr. Calloway's face lit up with pleasure at her unexpected responsiveness. "I've drawn up a set of *Resolutions* in answer to the Open Letter," he said, "to which I want the signature of every minister in Leitersville—in which I declare the absolute freedom of the pulpit from coercion by vested interests and repudiate their right to dictate our duty to us. It is our Declaration of Independence. Can you tell me, Mrs. Watts—do you know—whether your husband will be apt to sign my *Resolutions*?"

"I'm afraid he won't," answered Jane reluctantly.

"If I could get a majority of the ministers to sign, it would create a public opinion on our side."

"Do you think the other ministers will sign?" asked Jane.

"Most of them will be afraid to. If so influential a pastor as Mr. Watts would sign, all the rest would have courage to follow."

"I'm afraid," Jane shook her head, "you can't hope for Mr. Watts' help. The most that you can count on is that he will remain neutral."

"That is, on Leiter's side."

"He would say 'neutral.' You see, he thinks the pulpit's function is only to teach the general principles of Christianity and leave to Captains of Industry—to 'those who know'—the practical application of Christianity to concrete cases of Industrialism."

"But how can Captains of Industry be trusted not to be biased by self-interest in adjusting cases which involve their own losses or gains?"

"Yes, isn't it naïve of them to ask the ministers to leave the moral and spiritual settlement of industrial problems to them—'who know'?"

"If the Church," said the rector, "yields up its right of moral censorship of the social order, it cannot justify its continued existence."

"I wish Robert thought that!"

"Your influence with him ought to count, Mrs. Watts!" smiled Mr. Calloway.

"I'm not very religious, you see," said Jane.

"Oh, yes, you are! Much more so than your husband!"

Jane was startled. Was that true? And how did this man know it who had never seen her before?

"What makes you think so?" she asked interestedly.

"Your face makes me think of Anna, the Prophetess."

"Oh, horrors! 'She was a widow of about foreshore and four years!'"

"She was a very young widow when she first began to serve in the Temple. I think she looked like you!"

"I remember she's quite well spoken of in the Gospel—I'll look at myself with interest next time I am near a mirror. Why do you think I ought to be able to influence Robert? If you were married, *you* could not be swerved by your wife from a course you thought was right, could you?"

"I might be led to modify my opinions. However, if I can't count on Mr. Watts' help with my *Resolutions*,



may I count on yours, Mrs. Watts, in my efforts to get the teachers reinstated in the public schools?"

"What could I do?"

"You might get in touch with wives of the school board members and rouse them; and help to create a strong public opinion against such tyranny!"

"Two-thirds of the school board, you know, are in Mr. Leiter's employ at his Iron Works. The rest are indirectly dependent upon him."

"His power must be destroyed!"

"The Church On The Avenue is also dependent upon him."

"It is more dependent upon Jesus Christ."

"When you are irrevocably joined to another your freedom of action is necessarily a bit hampered. How can I work against my husband?"

"I'm glad to find a modern woman who thinks she's 'irrevocably joined' in marriage!"

"But, Mr. Calloway, I wouldn't deceive you—I'm not mediæval! Of course I consider marriage only comparatively irrevocable, not absolutely."

"I'll talk that out with you another time. Just now I want to insist that you can't be working against your husband when you are working for social justice."

"Would you never compromise in your human relations? Just look at me—the wife of the pastor of The Church On The Avenue? What can I really do?"

"You can live with integrity before God! Whatever you may lose, you gain so much more—"

"I'm afraid most of us," said Jane, shaking her head, "have not attained to your height."

"I've been trying for two days," he said, ignoring her personality, which evidently did not impress him, "to get a hall in which to hold a protest meeting against the action of the school board, the sentiment in the town being strong enough, I am sure, to enable us to do something. But every hall in Leitersville has been refused me."

"Mr. Leiter and his confederates own them all," nodded Jane.

"Also, the two newspapers, both influenced by Leiter, refuse to publish my *Resolutions* or my answer to the Open Letter of the Employers' Association. If only the Church would get into the *real* fights that have to be made!—against war, industrial wrongs, corrupt courts, corrupt politics! The Church's rôle is futile exhortation far behind the battle front! It takes so much more love to fight evil than simply to bless and do nothing! Preachers talk in glittering general terms about the need of applying Christianity to the evils of the day—but to find one among them who has the courage to stand out boldly against any of the concrete wrongs that are crushing us, is to find what society labels a fanatic!"

As he spoke, Jane realized that here was indeed a force to be reckoned with—let the smug and the complacent watch out! Whatever the Church and society might do to crush this man, he would rise above and go beyond them, carrying many with him into a larger, truer world that would accept and exalt him.

"Most Christian ministers," she said, "seem obliged to defend the present social order."

"When they should be the most searching judges of

it. Thousands are leaving the Church, not to shake off religion, but to find it!"

"I was wondering," Jane admitted, "how a man like you happens to have chosen the Church—"

"The Church might be saved if honest, thoughtful men were tolerated in its ministry. But I am finding that they are not. The Church will none of them. Therefore, the Church is doomed."

"You don't expect, then, to remain in the Church?"

"It won't be a question of my giving up the Church—the Church will presently give *me* up—without regret!"

"Oh, well," answered Jane consolingly, in her southern drawl, "do you know what Henry Ward Beecher called the Episcopal clergy? 'A little company of pleasant gentlemen in uniform.' You don't belong with them, Mr. Calloway!"

"I shall, however, do all the damage I can while they do let me stay!"

"I wish Robert were here to talk with you!"

"Is it worth my while to appeal to him, Mrs. Watts?—or are you sure he won't act against Mr. Leiter?"

"He would not put it that way—"

"I'd like an opportunity to put it to him that way," said Calloway with his rare smile.

"You see he believes in compromise."

"Some situations do not admit of compromise." Mr. Calloway rose and held out his hand. "You are going to work with me for the school teachers?"

"I—O, what ought I to do?"

"You ought to do the best that it is in you to do. You ought to stand for something! Don't be supine! This

town at this hour needs your services and your husband's. If he will not give his, is that any reason why you should withhold yours? I don't think it is, Mrs. Watts."

"Your standard seems to me a little more than human," sighed Jane.

"Oh, I know all about how hard it is to give up pleasing those we love!" Mr. Calloway said with a melancholy little laugh.

"I'm afraid I'm not strong enough to do it," said Jane shaking her head. "If you want really efficient help, get Miss Lawrence to work with you."

"The librarian? But Mr. Leiter employs her."

"That won't stop her."

"Her helping me would stop her working in the library, however."

"Yes, but do you know that it was she that advised the teachers to join the Federation? Of course Mr. Leiter has not found that out yet. So, until he does, she will gladly work hand in hand with any one, even a clergyman, who claims to be fighting for justice and righteousness.

"'Even a clergyman?'"

"She'd agree with you that honest, thoughtful men cannot remain in the Church. Oh, what a letter she wrote me when she found I was going to marry a Presbyterian minister!"

"A woman who can act against her own self-interest would naturally doubt the modern clergyman! Shall I find it hard to make her believe in me? Will my 'cloth' make her skeptical? Hasn't it come to a pretty pass

when a Christian minister's profession is a label of insincerity!"

"You will find Miss Lawrence will recognize sincerity wherever she finds it—even in a clergyman!"

"If she is *that* open-minded, I'll venture!" he smiled.

When, at this moment, Robert, acting on the assumption that Mr. Calloway had of course by this time left the Manse, walked blithely into the parlor, Jane was highly entertained at his look of consternation at finding himself trapped.

However, being far too practical in clerical diplomacy to betray himself, he came forward with suave politeness and gave his hand to the rector.

Of the two men, Mr. Calloway was the more reserved and less conciliatory. Again without preamble he came at once to the object of his call.

"Will you join me, Mr. Watts, in helping the teachers in this struggle they're having?"

"But their case is so simple, Mr. Calloway. No least need in the world for them to 'struggle.' Shall we sit down? They've only to resign from the Federation and their schools will be restored to them. And," he added jocularly, "Mrs. Watts and I will be able to keep our cook! Our cook threatens to leave us to take one of the vacant school jobs! Don't you feel, Mr. Calloway, that the doubtful good the teachers might do in joining this Federation, cannot be measured against the inexpressible harm of forcing the school board to replace forty excellent experienced teachers by perfectly incapable ones?"

"The new ones being gagged and bound slaves of our

boss-ruled school board! Unfit to teach American children fundamental American principles! Shall we teach our children to salute the flag with a lie? 'With liberty and justice for all?'"

"I am ready to admit," said Robert with conscious large-mindedness, "that Labor has had to fight for justice in the past; but surely," he gravely added, "Labor has now reached a point of power where she's giving Capital an equally hard fight for justice."

"Capital is not fighting for justice; it's fighting to keep its special privileges, its luxuries and its huge power over the masses—while Labor is fighting for a decent standard of living. On which side of these two clear-cut issues do you, a Christian minister, stand, Mr. Watts?"

"I see wrongs on both sides, Mr. Calloway."

"So do we all. But when all's said, it does simmer down to a question between a decent standard of living on the one side, and on the other the retaining of vast millions and of a power which no man is fit to wield over his fellows. Can you as a Christian who preaches Christ's doctrine of love and brotherhood, hesitate as to which side you must support?"

"Well, you see," smiled Robert, "capitalists are my Christian brethren too!"

"And your financial partners! The ministry isn't free. We are supposed to think only as the capitalistic supporters of our churches tell us to think."

"And you would have us think as Labor tells us to think?"

"As Jesus tells us when He says, 'All ye are brethren'; 'A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the



things which he possesseth.' Do you really believe, Mr. Watts, that wealth is distributed according to any ethical principle? Or is it merely taken over by the strongest in the economic struggle, giving to a few men of admittedly low moral standards power over many?"

"The strong will always rule and rightly so."

"'Whoever will be first among you should be your servant.' I cannot see why the Church should sanction a régime in which the large laboring class carries on its back the small capitalistic class that gets so enormously much and gives little or nothing!"

"The capitalistic class gives most lavishly for the social welfare," protested Mr. Watts.

"Do you think that such words as 'love' and 'service' can find a true place in our business world with its scrambling competitions and its vast battle-field of organized self-interest? Why, the whole business world is one huge, hideous gambling table! Would you, Mr. Watts, have the courage to present Mr. Jacob Leiter with a framed motto to hang in his office—

BY THIS SHALL ALL MEN KNOW THAT YE ARE WISE MEN  
OF BUSINESS, IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.

Don't you think that to talk of a Christian business life would be so funny as to provoke Jehovah Himself to mighty laughter?"

"I hardly think, Mr. Calloway," Robert gravely answered, "that you and I can mend the world's wrongs, do you? Changes have got to come through evolution—a long, slow process."

"Yes, but why should we make it slower and longer by blocking instead of helping on the better order? Why has the Church always blocked progress and never blazed a trail?"

"The Church has taken a firm stand for Prohibition—"

"Yes, now that Prohibition is popular and the law of the land. Did she preach Prohibition in the eighteenth century when it was fashionable to get 'as drunk as a lord?' In Susan B. Anthony's day did the Church help the women in their great fight for justice? The Church is cautiously favoring disarmament now—but behold her criminal stand while the slaughter was on! And won't she decorate her altars with flags as soon as the next bloody orgy begins? What does she have to say of the continued imprisonment of conscientious objectors? Why, the Church should deify the conscientious objectors of the world! But the voices lifted in protest against their imprisonment are not heard in the Church, but well outside of it. Oh, yes, the Church to-day is against Negro slavery and the White Slave traffic and a whipping-post and every other unpopular sin which it is perfectly safe to oppose. But what is its attitude towards the crimes of our social order?"

"It does not condone them, Mr. Calloway."

"It does not openly denounce them. The only evils the Church attacks are those of the disreputable part of the community!"

"I deny that! It seems to me you are not very loyal to your own profession," suggested Robert.

"I'll admit I'm wrong if you will consent to join me

in some pioneer work for a more Christian social order, Mr. Watts—by asking the school board to reinstate the teachers regardless of their membership in the Federation, and thus establish their constitutional right to join or not to join any legal and orderly organization they wish to.”

“I’d like to help you, Mr. Calloway, if it were a clear-cut issue between right and wrong, but I cannot see it so.”

Mr. Calloway rose. “I suppose it is quite useless to ask you to sign my *Resolutions* protesting against the Open Letter to the clergymen of the town?”

“Mr. Calloway, what I am paid to do here is the work of my church and not all this outside business. I prefer to keep out of these controversies. I can be much more useful by sticking to my own specific work.”

“And you do not consider it your own specific work to protest against bribery, corruption, autocracy?”

“Assuredly, where I see them. I do not happen to see them where you do. And I think that compromise is the law of life. There are very few if any clear-cut issues.”

“He that is neither hot nor cold, you know—Well,” Mr. Calloway abruptly terminated their talk, “good-morning. Thank you for so patiently hearing me out on a side you’ve evidently little sympathy with.”

“I don’t say that exactly.”

“No, that’s your trouble, I’m afraid—you don’t say anything ‘exactly.’ While you don’t act against the right you don’t come out wholeheartedly for it.”

"And that," thought Jane when the rector had gone, is the secret of Robert's success as a minister—and his failure as a Christian!"

Avoiding a tête-à-tête with her husband, which she felt would just now be rather an awkward strain, she hurried away to her daily routine of "the up-stairs work."

"If Robert took his profession in the sporting way Mr. Calloway does, what exciting fun it would be to work with him," she mused, her eyes exceedingly bright as she moved about like one in a dream and made the beds. "I love his face and his manner and his sincerity and his directness and his earnestness and—here, Jane Watts! If you don't watch out you will be taking a header into a highly improper infatuation! I'm feeling all the symptoms! His hands are so expressive!—fine and sensitive. I wanted to hold them—Remember, woman, you've got to restrain your feelings now you're married—it isn't moral to let yourself go the way you used to when you were a mere virgin. To be loved by a man like that, wouldn't it be thrilling! To be held in his arms—oh, you horrible woman! You're *married*! His unconsciousness of himself and his devotion to his ideals are unique! Oh, *why* am I so susceptible? Robert would never have such feelings about another woman as I am having about that man! I'd die if he did! Robert is better than I am. Mr. Calloway does not have, like other ministers, that furtive shadow in his eyes—It won't be safe for me ever to see him again! I dare not! I shall take care not to! I wonder whether Robert would notice it if I stayed away from our church next Sunday evening and

went to St. Mark's. But some one would be sure to tell him they saw me at the Episcopal Church. I'd never be underhanded and sneaky anyway. I wonder how I could manage to attend a service at St. Mark's without any one's knowing—That rich, sincere voice reciting the Litany would mean something! Oh, dear, I never dreamed that in these days marriage could so curtail a woman's liberty. I thought it only curtailed a man's. I wish I were as free as Augusta is!"

She scorned herself for the sharp pang of jealousy she felt of Augusta's unhampered state in which she could so heartily join Mr. Calloway in his crusade; Augusta with her beauty and charm; so capable and compelling.

"And both of them unmarried. Charles Leiter will have to be on the watch!"

But, she reflected, Charles, with his wealth, his social prestige, good looks and other pleasing personal qualities of which he was not unconscious, would be quite incapable of seeing a rival to his dazzling self in the rector of a small town parish, a clergyman who gave large promise of being a conspicuous failure in the Church. Charles would not believe that any girl could be so unworldly as not to admire success and power above an impracticable devotion to impossible ideals.

Jane worked fast and furiously about her house that morning to escape a realization that made her wince—the consciousness of Mr. Clement Calloway's bigness in comparison with her husband's smug, safe littleness. She didn't want to see it! She refused to look at it.

"If Robert had such thoughts about me! Oh!—Oh!"

she sighed as she flew about raising dust with a mop. "I must hold on to what I have—to what little I have—or where will I be? If only Augusta—"

There was the sound below of the opening of the front door and a light step tripping up-stairs.

"Talk of the—Oh, Augusta!" Jane called over the bannisters, "come hither and save my immortal soul!"



## CHAPTER IV

“**T**HE fight is on!” Augusta announced as she and Jane sat down on the parson’s half-made bed. Her voice was calm, but her cheeks were delicately flushed and her eyes sparkled. Ever since she had come to Leitersville Jane had felt in her friend a repressed intensity, a controlled excitement, that was so unlike the serene and rather melancholy dignity in which she had been wont to hold herself that Jane wondered whether it could be her “affair” with Charles Leiter that was affecting her so vividly. Always in their references to Charles, Augusta was self-conscious, reserved, guarded—and unmistakably nervous. Jane was sure she had not been in the least like this with any of her other suitors. Yet she did not seem to be in love. Jane could not, somehow, feel that she was. It was impossible to guess from any signs what really were her sentiments towards Charles. *Why* was she always such a mystery?

“What fight?” she inquired. “Between you and Charles over another soul-mate you’ve discovered? Is he by any chance the Reverend Mr. Clement Calloway?”

“Are you having a brain storm?” asked Augusta solicitously.

“Yes. Over Mr. Calloway! If you’re not already engaged to Charles, do hold off and look Mr. Calloway over. Since I’m not free, *you* take him, so that I shall be able to see him often at close range. Oh, Augusta, he’s lovely!”

"Isn't he?" responded Augusta, her face alight. "I've just had a talk with him at the library. I've never known a minister like that! If there were many more of them I should not feel about the Church as I do. He is dynamic! One of those rare souls that can actually revive one's wilting faith in human goodness and worthwhileness!"

"He certainly made progress with you in one short hour! What will poor Charles think about it?"

"Jane," Augusta broke out impetuously, "let me point out to you that Charles Leiter is not a man that would marry a girl who has neither money nor position—of whose family he knows nothing—no matter how much he might want her!"

"He'll come to it," Jane predicted confidently. "If you can stand his family and his awful step-mother—"

She wondered as she saw Augusta turn white, why she always apparently took the mere mention of the vulgarity of the Leiter family so tragically.

"But it's too absurd for Charles to be posing 'round as having family pride," laughed Jane. "When once you see his father and his step-mother!"

"Oh, I've seen J. L. Very much so!" returned Augusta, recovering her composure. "Yesterday at my office in the library he had an interview with me. His daughter, Mrs. Renzheimer, had told him of my flaunting my 'Bolshevistic ideas' in the Civic Club, and he gave me warning; told me I must have no ideas that differed from his if I wanted to remain in his employ. I reminded him that our contract was for a year and that it contained no legal stipulation as to what the 'ideas'

of the librarian must be on any subject whatsoever. He replied that he never allowed little things like contracts to block his path—as I would learn to my sorrow if he heard any further complaints of my ‘spreading Bolshevism in Leitersville!’ ”

“Oh, dear!” mourned Jane, “then your days in Leitersville are certainly numbered. Unless Charles marries you in spite of his father!”

“I think Jake’s horror of the bugaboo he calls a ‘Bolshevist’ is so great that he would be quite capable of disinheriting his only son if he dared to marry one!” said Augusta. “And Charles would never consent to be poor.”

“Perhaps you don’t do justice either to Charles or to your own charm. But tell me—what is this fight that is on?”

“Between two factions of the Civic Club, one faction being led by Mrs. Renzheimer who, you know, is the Club’s president.”

“What about?” asked Jane.

“About me.”

“How exciting! Tell on!”

“The day after the expulsion of the teachers the program committee of the Civic Club held a special meeting and voted to invite me to address a mass meeting in the Club’s auditorium to-morrow afternoon—my talk to be a discussion of the action of the school board. Of course I consented. Delighted to have the chance.”

“But I’m amazed that they asked you!” cried Jane. “That conservative Club! For of course they know on which side you’ll be.”

"I was surprised too. But now Mrs. Renzheimer and some of her followers are canvassing the town, calling on every member of the Club to urge them to vote, at the mass meeting to-morrow, for the withdrawal of the invitation given me by the program committee and to forbid my speaking. But the program committee and those of the Club who want me to speak are also canvassing! So, my dear, two equally indignant ladies representing two opposing factions will be coming to see you to-day to solicit your support. That's the fight that's on."

"I'm afraid the majority won't dare to vote against Mrs. Renzheimer, Augusta! She has always held the women here in the hollow of her hand, just as her father holds the business and politics."

"Yes, and she is very angry at the high-handed action of the program committee in having asked me to speak on this matter without first consulting her. Mr. Leiter called me on the telephone this morning and ordered me not to deliver that speech even if the vote of the Club should be in favor of it. He demanded my promise not to."

"And when you refused to give it?—as of course you did."

"He threatened to discharge me at the end of the month. So I resigned immediately. The library is temporarily closed."

"Oh, then you'll be leaving here soon!" said Jane dolefully.

"I shall stay until I have seen this thing through at the

Club—and perhaps a—a few days longer. I never meant to stay, Jane—of course my position here was always untenable. It was only a mad adventure—my coming here to—to—” she faltered, coloring deeply.

“A mad adventure!” repeated Jane puzzled. “Can one have mad adventures in Leitersville? I admit you are giving us some excitement; but I can’t see why you thought it worth while to come at all if you knew you would not stay. Was it because Charles wanted you to come?”

“No—no, he didn’t particularly want it. He could see more of me in New York. He hates being in Leitersville.”

“I’ve never known him to stay here so long at a time before,” Jane agreed. “And I doubt, Augusta, whether even you could hold him here after his step-mother gets back!”

“I’m sure I couldn’t!” answered Augusta with a dry laugh, her eyes downcast, not meeting Jane’s.

Jane, puzzled by her tone and manner, did not speak at once.

“Since you have lost your job,” she presently asked, “shall you need some money, dear?”

“No, thank you, Jane, I am supplied.”

“It is a new experience to Jake Leiter to have an employee refuse to knuckle down to him, I’m sure!” Jane chuckled.

“He told me that if I attempted to deliver a ‘seditious’ speech at the Civic Club, I would be ‘dealt with by the authorities.’ So now you see it is a duel of forces

between Jacob Leiter and me; and between Mrs. Renzheimer and me; and between the two factions of the Civic Club."

"Does Charlie take your side?"

"Stands by and looks on in huge enjoyment and amusement!"

"Jacob Leiter has never yet been foiled of his will in Leitersville, Augusta!"

"Jane, I shall deliver that speech if I have to stand on a soap box in the Square! I really don't expect that a majority of the Civic Club will stand by me, but that will not stop me."

"I wish I were free to jump in and help!" said Jane ruefully.

"I'm here this morning, my dear, to ask you whether you will support me, rather than Mrs. Renzheimer, at the Club to-morrow afternoon?"

"Why, of course I will."

"You will be sure to come to the meeting?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"Won't Robert make it difficult for you?"

"I foresee that Robert will have to announce from the pulpit that he disclaims all responsibility for the deeds and words of his wife!"

"Charles says his father has probably hinted to a few business men who dare not offend him, that they will do well to request their wives and daughters of the Club to stand by Mrs. Renzheimer and not permit my talk to come off."

"There'll be a hot time in the old town!" exclaimed Jane appreciatively.



"Mrs. Renzheimer is only too glad of an excuse to work with her father against me, because she thinks I am trying to usurp her hitherto absolute social sway here. She is incapable of understanding a woman's not having petty ambitions like that."

"But without trying to do it, Augusta, you have just naturally attached to yourself about half her followers! Which will probably save her immortal soul that was drunk with power!"

"My stake is a bigger one than the saving of Mrs. Renzheimer's little soul, which I cannot believe is immortal anyway—Providence would not be so stupid as to perpetuate through all eternity a thing so altogether useless!"

"I don't believe you realize what an impregnable fortress J. L. is in Leitersville!"

"He will at last discover one person that won't spoil her life for the sake of the trash that money can buy!" declared Augusta. "I say, Jane, people miss a lot who give up the divine possibilities of life for the vulgar superstition of money!"

"There is one other besides you, Augusta, who is not missing that 'divine possibility'—Mr. Calloway."

"Yes. If all ministers took the attitude he does, what a power they would be!"

"What empty pews they'd have!" sighed Jane.

"Do they have full pews these days?"

"Business is rather dull. Robert is thinking of boosting it by advertising Moving Picture Vespers. I suggested some drawing themes—*Visual Proof of the Immorality of the Screen; Salome's Dance Before Herod;*

*Realistic Scenes from Solomon's Harem*; strictly scriptural themes, you'll observe. But Robert rejected my suggestions."

"Jane, how a limb like you manages to keep out of trouble in this town! I can't. And I have not noticed your going out of your way to be cautious."

"A sure instinct has made me hold myself aloof from intimacy with any of the congregation; I'm friendly, but not intimate—making it impossible for them to dictate to me and giving them small chance to criticise me."

"They don't have to have a chance, Jane!"

"I suppose not. What do they say?" asked Jane with eager but quite impersonal interest.

"I've heard that you stick at home too much; that you gad about too much; that you neglect the congregation in your devotion to your home; that you neglect your husband for church work; that you are too dressy; that you don't dress up to your position; that you are too stand-offish with your 'betters'; that you are too familiar with your 'inferiors'; that you are pretty; that you are sallow; that you are 'smart'; that you are shallow; and that you have quite too many towels in your wash—they evidently count them on the line on Monday."

"They would! Oh, I wish you could see the letter Robert received from J. L. beginning, 'Reverend Watts, Dear Pastor,'— explaining that that Open Letter of the Employers' Association was aimed at Mr. Calloway and not at such exemplary pastors as Robert."

"I only hope J. L.'s letter was rotten enough to force Robert to take a stand!"

Jane's face fell. "Robert considers Mr. Calloway's

'*Resolutions*' in rebuttal *more* rotten, though they merely 'resolve' that the ministers shall not submit to dictation from vested interests."

"And Robert won't subscribe to that?" asked Augusta incredulously.

"If he did, we'd have to pack and leave with you, Augusta."

"These Christian Church people!" said Augusta despairingly. "It's really beautiful to see Mrs. Renzheimer's Christian forbearance towards me—her sweet, amiable patience and forgiveness; so slimy-sweet she makes my skin prickle; while all the time she is trying slyly to defeat everything I want to do in the Club or in the town."

"And do you know," said Jane, looking worried, "beneath that bland smile that she always wears, I feel a really cold-blooded cruelty?"

"I believe it's there. Her poor husband has taken to drink!"

"Isn't she funny about him?" Jane laughed involuntarily. "The way she constantly quotes him, putting pretty, dainty sentiments and love speeches into his mouth—when every one knows that he is a 'tough', a 'rough-neck!' "

"Yes, poor Charles gets so embarrassed when she does it!—and when she gets off her bromidic platitudes with the air of announcing newly-discovered truths—such as, 'Travel is so broadening,' 'Nature is wonderful,' 'Life is brief,' 'Death is always a shock even when expected,'—you know; you have heard her."

"She once told me that it was the architectural beauty

of foreign cathedrals that attracted her. Like saying that what you like about sugar is its sweetness."

"And," added Augusta, "she told me she considered the Wagner operas quite 'too impassioned to be strictly refined!'"

"Does Charles feel badly about the antagonism between you and his people?"

"I am not antagonistic to *them*," replied Augusta, coloring rather unaccountably, "only to J. L.'s life and works which so wrong this town."

"The town calls him its creator and benefactor."

"The town should learn that 'benefactors' are getting out of date."

"You expect too much of this town, my dear."

There had been a ring at the front door bell and now Lizzie came up-stairs to announce a visitor—"Mrs. Renzheimer."

"To solicit your support against me at the Civic Club to-morrow!" stated Augusta.

"Not 'solicit.' Command. Doesn't my husband hold his church at the will of her father? And she's such a fearfully determined person!" sighed Jane. "You'll have to come downstairs and back me up, Augusta! She can't ask me right before you to vote against your speaking!"

"Oh, can't she! You'll see! I'll come."

## CHAPTER V

MRS. RENZHEIMER, as Augusta and Jane came into the room and greeted her, tried to conceal her too-evident chagrin at finding Miss Lawrence at the Manse.

Had it not been for that over-sweet cast of countenance which Augusta frankly called her "smirk," Mrs. Renzheimer, about thirty-five years old, would have been a pretty, not to say beautiful woman, for she had regular features, a clear complexion, abundant dark hair and a good figure; also, though her dress rather too loudly proclaimed its expensiveness, it was otherwise in good taste and style. But her small bright eyes, set close together, looked almost sly, and the smile of her full red lips was almost too angelic to be sincere.

"No one could be as sweet as Mrs. Renzheimer looks and not be over-ripe; ready to decay," Jane had said to Robert the first time she had met their leading church member.

Just now, in contrast with Jane's simplicity and Augusta's distinction, Mrs. Renzheimer looked a bit "common."

"Miss Lawrence," she began graciously, "may I spare you a walk in the rain and let my chauffeur drive you home?—he's at the door. He may as well, while I talk to Mrs. Watts," she urged in her desperate need to get

rid of her opponent's inconvenient presence here now.

"Thank you, but I'm not going home just yet," Augusta serenely returned.

"I thought as it has begun to rain you might like to ride."

"Thank you, I don't mind the rain."

"The rain came up so unexpectedly," said Mrs. Renzheimer conversationally. "It's always the unexpected that happens, isn't it?—as I told George this morning when he received an unexpected summons to go to Columbia; and he said, 'Now, wifey, dear, how true that is!' Shall you be at the Club meeting to-morrow afternoon, Mrs. Watts?"

"Yes."

"That's good," she smiled kindly upon little Mrs. Watts with her habitual air of patronizing which in Jane's first days in Leitersville had been rather trying to her, but to which she had become so accustomed as not to notice it. "I wish you attended our Club meetings more regularly Mrs. Watts. Your influence is needed—*on the right side*—of all our questions. And we shall especially need your influence—on the right side—to-morrow afternoon."

"In so far as my feeble intelligence can see the right side, there's where my influence shall be."

"You must leave me help what you modestly call your 'feeble intelligence,' though I'm sure you don't quite do yourself justice. But I always make such a thorough study of the questions that come before the Club from time to time that I do feel equipped to advise you."

"Thank you."



"Don't mention it. *Glad* to advise you. George was saying to me the other day, 'Sally-kin' (his pet name for me), 'if I didn't have your woman's intuition to guide me in this mundane sphere, where would I be?'"

"Is it still working—that same old Woman's Intuition?" smiled Jane. "I thought we had routed it out with Suffrage and higher education."

"Oh, my dear, nothing can ever take its place! To what else do we owe the beautiful harmony that until very recently," she added significantly, her tone dulcet, "has existed in our Civic Club? I lament so deeply that our long years of sweet fellowship seem broken in upon by questions which the Club has no business to meddle with; questions which our business men alone can handle. Our meddling only makes things harder for our men."

"That's good news," said Augusta cheerfully. "To make it harder for our men, for instance, to expel teachers from the public schools wholesale, for joining the American Federation of Teachers."

"We must have teachers in our public schools who are too patriotically loyal to our national institutions to join Labor Unions," said Mrs. Renzheimer with gentle firmness. "We are focussing upon the Girl, these days, and must give her the teacher whose principle is, 'American women for the women of the world!'"

Augusta emitted a groan of suffering. "You have an awful effect upon me, dear Mrs. Renzheimer! You make me want to say, 'Damn American women!' But," she added virtuously, "I shall not yield to the temptation."

Mrs. Renzheimer's sweet lips tightened and her small eyes sparkled like points of steel. Until Augusta had come to Leitersville no one had ever treated her choice, chaste sentiments with derision; not even her ironical brother Charles, who was now being so injudiciously "attentive" to this most objectionable girl!

Jane tried to fill the breach. "The flowers you sent to the Church last Sunday, Mrs. Renzheimer, were so beautiful. Were they from your conservatory?"

"Yes. I love to send my own flowers to Gawd's house! George often says to me, 'Wifey, to me a flower is a thott of Gawd!'"

Jane and Augusta avoided each other's eyes, while their faces grew pink, and they could not trust themselves to speak.

"How did you enjoy the orchestral concert last night, Mrs. Watts?" Mrs. Renzheimer asked to gain a bit of time while she inwardly cogitated a means of getting rid of Augusta.

"Wonderfully! I'm so glad your father's philanthropy to Leitersville includes such delightful treats as Damrosch orchestral concerts! That's one form of charity that I shall never resent, but always accept with the most exemplary humility and gratitude!"

Mrs. Renzheimer regarded Jane doubtfully. "Gratitude is the rarest of virtues, as George often says to me. *Well* may Leitersville be grateful to dear Puppa for giving it such an exceedingly pretty concert. Who could hear such music as that," she appealed meltingly, "and not believe in a Gawd and a Hereafter?"

"Why, don't you know what it *was* they played?"

exclaimed Augusta. "An oriental orgy of the maddest, most abandoned love and passion! Rimsky Korsikoff's *Scheherazade*!"

Mrs. Renzheimer looked embarrassed, but resentful. "It may have meant that to you, Miss Lawrence. My mind does not run along such suggestive channels, so it could not possibly have had such a low, vulgar meaning for me!"

She turned to address Jane exclusively. "Speaking of our recent lack of harmony in the Club, caused by arousing a spirit of unrest and distrust where all had heretofore been peace and confidence, it grieves me so much to see how it is transforming our dear Club from a beneficent influence in our city to a center of strife and contention."

"But it is your faction, Mrs. Renzheimer," Augusta said, "that is striving and contending—to check free speech, the cornerstone of American liberty. And you talk about these school teachers being unpatriotic!"

"We are striving and contending to maintain the confidence and peace which Leitersville always enjoyed before you came here, Miss Lawrence. What good does it do to rouse in the public heart doubt and suspicion of our most influential and respected citizens? Why wouldn't you rather think well of your fellow-men?"

"I'd *love* to think well of them if they'd only give me reason to! Do you think well of all your fellow-men, Mrs. Renzheimer? Of those forty teachers?—and of me?"

"I like to think that our people are at heart loyal and fine and true. Don't you?"

"I'd like to think it if it's true. You get nowhere on false assumptions—on what you'd *like* to think."

"Assume that they are good and it will make them good," smiled Mrs. Renzheimer. "I don't like to think that evil deeds are being done and I won't admit that they are. I won't hear my fellow-men maligned!"

"You are willing to hear those teachers maligned. Or Mr. Calloway. Or Russians. Or Germans. Or Labor Unions."

"No, I would not malign them, I'd ignore them, and talk about the good deeds of men like Puppa. That's why I like Reverend Watts' sermons so much better than Reverend Calloway's—Reverend Watts' are so clear and simple and full of heart-appeal! In his four sermons on Haste, Waste, Envy and Anger, he gave us so much practical truth! Do you remember how he said, 'Don't hasten so much that you stumble, but hasten enough to get there?' Such *practical* advice! And so clear and simple! He told us we ought to take time to do a thing *well*. And in his sermon on Waste, do you remember he said that we all ought to be prudently saving and economical and not improvident, yet not stingy? Now how true that is! He said—"

"Oh, my dear," protested Augusta, "spare the preacher's wife! She has heard these sermons once. Couldn't escape! Don't be so hard on her as to make her hear them all over again!"

"I could hear one of Mr. Watts' beautiful discourses over and over! I don't see how any one could prefer one of Reverend Calloway's sermons to Reverend Watts's! Reverend Watts dwells, not upon the sinful-

ness of man, but upon the love of Gawd. How much more helpful! Husband so often says to me, 'Sally-kin, you will never know how your simple belief in me has strengthened and upheld me to "fight the good fight".' The Civic Club," she added, "has always (until recently) stood firmly for everything that is American and certainly not for such things as you advocate, Miss Lawrence! *Why* any one would want to stir up the laboring men to be more rebellious than they already are against Gawd's will, I cannot imagine!"

"If you were a laboring man perhaps you'd take a different view of God's will (of which you seem to know such a thundering lot, my dear friend)! Perhaps you would think it was God's will that you, as well as a lot of speculators and grafters on the Avenue, should have at least a chance at a bit of ease and comfort and even a taste of luxury—or culture."

"In America every one does have a chance to be educated."

"But your father is trying to have the Child Labor law and the compulsory education law changed and modified! I often wonder how he would feel at having his own young granddaughter working in one of his factories in Leitersville!"

"He is only trying to check a lot of socialistic legislation that," Mrs. Renzheimer contended, "interferes with personal initiative and liberty and undermines the stability and security of our industries. Isn't it for the laborer's own good that industry should be secure? That's why" (she turned to Jane), "we cannot tolerate the rebellion of those forty teachers. If those who have

the molding of our young people are rebellious, what can we look for in this country but an upheaval like that in Russia?"

"But you know," Jane pointed out, "it is a truism that the thing that always brings about such upheavals is suppression of the people."

"You call it 'suppression' to forbid the teachers to join the Federation of Labor?"

"What would you call it, Mrs. Renzheimer?"

"I'd call it protection of our schools and of American industries. And I trust, Mrs. Watts," said Mrs. Renzheimer with a soft, smiling emphasis like a chocolate coating over steel, "that you, too, will call it that."

"I'm afraid," said Jane, "I'd call it anarchistic interference with the rights and liberties of American citizens."

Mrs. Renzheimer's smile seemed to grow more mellow, while the steely glint of her eyes became sharper. "Now, my dear Mrs. Watts, I know *you* are not—cannot be!—one of those weak, misguided women that Miss Lawrence is leading by the nose!"

"How about *your* trying to lead her by the nose, Mrs. Renzheimer?" inquired Augusta.

"My poor nose!" said Jane.

But Mrs. Renzheimer was not to be diverted any longer. She came to her point, speaking in a tone of ominous calm. "I assume of course, dear Mrs. Watts, that you are *not* in favor of the teachers against the school board—and against my father!"



"The more immediate question, however, is the Club's permitting Miss Lawrence to talk on this subject, isn't it?"

"If she talks she will take the teachers' side. Therefore, if your loyalty, Mrs. Watts, is where it must be (I don't question it of course) you must oppose her speaking."

"I don't quite follow that," said Jane, perplexed.

"As the wife of our pastor you must stand for law and order and right authority."

"Not as your pastor's wife. As myself, a rational woman. No sane man or woman would dream of standing for anything else than law and order, Mrs. Renzheimer."

"I'm glad that you have not left yourself be corrupted," smiled Mrs. Renzheimer who, in spite of two years at a fashionable finishing school, had never got so far as to drop her provincial confusion in the use of "leave" and "let."

"But there seems to be a difference of opinion," added Jane, "as to which faction *is* standing for law and order and right authority. Do you feel that your side is so weak and Miss Lawrence's so strong that you dare not let her state her side?"

"I reckonize but one side. We want our Civic Club to leave such matters alone!"

"And," smiled Augusta, "discuss Ibsen and Bjørnsen and Ibanez and Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells and other foreign rebels and 'knockers,' without ever once suspecting (after an exhaustive 'study' of them) that they are

every one of them what your faction of the Club calls revolutionists!"

"We ought to appreciate our great advantage in having you to point out to us, my dear Miss Lawrence, what those well-known authors mean," said Mrs. Renzheimer sweetly, "since we are too stupid and ignorant to find out for ourselves!"

"The skill of most of our Club members in not seeing things which it doesn't suit them to see, is a source of constant wonder to me. To read all of Ibsen's plays and never once discover that he was an iconoclast of the sort we in America put to prison or deport these days! To go through Björnsen and Shaw and accept them—and then sanction the expulsion of the teachers and the Open Letter of the Employers' Association! It's very delightful!"

"We do only such standard authors in our Club as are considered classical and in good standing," insisted Mrs. Renzheimer, "and if Wells and Shaw and the others were what you say, they could not be so well thought of. You must be mistaken. You simply have not understood them yourself. You have read meanings into them that aren't there. Surely," she turned resolutely to Jane, "Reverend Watts is not taking sides against—against his own best interests—in these controversies that have so unfortunately arisen in Leitersville?"

"His own interests a true minister cannot consider before his Master's, can he, Mrs. Renzheimer?"

"Of course not; and that is why, no matter what outside pressure may be brought to bear upon Reverend Watts, or upon you, Mrs. Watts, you will both surely

stand by those who support Christ's cause; who believe in law and order and peace and love."

"I assure you, Mrs. Renzheimer, that Mr. Watts is giving these matters his earnest and—and prayerful—consideration," said Jane with what she felt to be consummate tact.

"If he is taking them to the Lord in prayer," said Mrs. Renzheimer piously, "he will surely be guided. And you, Mrs. Watts, remember," she playfully shook her finger at Jane, "the good example the minister's wife must set to us all!"

"The demoralizing effect of having every one expect me to be a Beautiful Example," answered Jane, "makes me fearful for my soul!"

"Do as you say dear Husband does, Mrs. Watts—take it to the throne of grace," advised Mrs. Renzheimer. "I've never yet failed to find there all the light and strength I needed. George often says to me, 'Sarah, without the influence of praying women, what a desert waste our mundane sphere would be!'"

"Oh hell!" breathed Augusta.

"Miss Lawrence!" exclaimed Mrs. Renzheimer, genuinely shocked, for Leitersville ladies in good and regular standing did not use strong expletives. "To use profanity!"

"I never do, Mrs. Renzheimer, except when you quote your George! It's the only thing that makes me forget myself!"

"You are the only person I've ever met that criticized my conversational powers," complained Mrs. Renzheimer. "Husband often says to me, 'Sally, dear, if your

table conversation with me were as unintellectual as that of most women, I—well, Sally, I just could not stand it, that's all, I couldn't *stand* it!"

Again Augusta and Jane had to keep their eyes from meeting.

"Miss Lawrence," said Mrs. Renzheimer, making another desperate effort to get rid of Augusta, "if you are waiting for the rain to stop, you see the sun is out now."

"I'll wait and let you drive me home, Mrs. Renzheimer. And the rain has not stopped."

"But you see for yourself the sun is out."

"Then there must be a rainbow!—for it is still raining."

"A rainbow? George always says," smiled Mrs. Renzheimer, "that to him a rainbow is like a smile of Gawd!"

There was a sudden sharp ring at the front door bell, followed at once by a heavy step in the hall, and Mr. George Renzheimer, a red-nosed, choleric little man, stalked into the room unceremoniously and faced his wife in a suppressed rage.

"Here you are! Mornin', Missus," nodding gruffly to Jane. "'Lo, Miss Lawrence! Look here, Sal, why the hell did you go off with the car when I tol' you I hadda drive to Columby? Been chasin' all over town after you!" he growled—but at the look in his wife's eyes fixed glassily upon him, he stopped short, scowling.

It was such a weird contrast to the tender sentiments she had been attributing to him, that one would naturally have looked to see her somewhat embarrassed. Not so, however. In a sweet, thoughtful tone she re-

marked to Jane, "Accidents will happen in the best regulated families! Won't they?"

"It's damned bad family regulation never to have my car when I want it!"

"I told you, George," she replied imperturbably, "that I intended to use the car this morning."

"I never get a whack at that car!" he complained. "Can't you use one of your old man's to-day and leave me have ourn?"

"I shall need the car until five o'clock this afternoon."

"But I *tol'* you I hadda go to—"

"George! That will do, please!"

"I tell you I gotta take the car, Sal, and I'm a-goin' to! Mornin' ladies,"—he started to leave the room as unceremoniously as he had entered it, but Mrs. Renzheimer stopped him peremptorily.

"*George!*"

"Well, whad' you want?"

"You can drive Miss Lawrence home, or wherever she wants to go from here, and then come back for me; by that time I shall have finished what I have to say *privately* to Mrs. Watts. I know you will excuse me, Miss Lawrence, for asking you to leave me to see Mrs. Watts alone."

It had been a tug of war as to which of these two should sit out the other; and it was a matter of some wonder to Jane that Augusta should be the one to have to yield. It seemed a dark portent of the outcome of the next day's struggle.

As Augusta rose, perforce, to go with George Renz-

heimer, Jane's eyes appealed to her not to desert her, and Augusta met the appeal with a quotation they had been won't to use upon each other in their college days; " 'Be firm, Clara, be firm,' said Mr. Murdstone."

Jane knew from Mrs. Renzheimer's expression, the moment she found herself alone with her, that this woman, looking upon her as her legitimate tool or prey, would fight to the last gasp to enlist her on the side which would oppose Augusta's speaking at the Club; and her heart sank.

"I understand of course, Mrs. Watts, that you hesitated to take sides definitely and openly while your friend was here. But *of course* you will not dream of voting in favor of Miss Lawrence's speaking to-morrow—against Puppa's wishes? You can talk right out to *me*, my dear; whatever you say shall be regarded as spoken in sacred confidence."

"I have no secrets to hide," said Jane.

"Fine, *fine* of you, my dear!—for if you are ready to come out openly and strongly on our side, it will be a great help. Miss Lawrence's following is surprisingly strong, *considering*. We'll have to do our utmost to crush, once and for all time, her baleful influence, I'm sorry to say!"

"I don't consider her influence 'baleful' at all, Mrs. Renzheimer!"

"I assure you that it is, my dear! You can quite safely take my word for it. Come to the meeting promptly, won't you, and if you'll speak as well as vote on our side—"

Jane asked herself, while Mrs. Renzheimer talked on,



"Shall I try to make her see this as I see it? If she really wanted the truth I might try; but she doesn't. It's the last thing she does want. It's her own way and her father's that she wants and nothing I say will affect her."

"So, now, my dear Mrs. Watts, to make assurance doubly sure, as dear George always puts it, I want you to give me your word of honor that you will support me in the struggle we shall certainly have at the Club tomorrow afternoon. For when once I have your word, I shall feel sure you can't be drawn away from the right course by poor Miss Lawrence's baleful influence."

"Please, Mrs. Renzheimer, do give me credit for having some mind of my own. It doesn't need Miss Lawrence to teach me to believe in our boasted American principle of free speech!"

"Do I understand you to mean that you *favor* her speaking?" asked Mrs. Renzheimer, her tone hushed, almost fearful.

"I would favor any one's speaking on any side of any question of such public interest as the expulsion of the teachers."

"Then you will not vote against her speaking?"

"If the invitation that was extended to Augusta by the program committee," began Jane—

The door opened and Robert walked into the parlor.

Jane scarcely knew whether she was relieved at the interruption or apprehensive of new complications. Would Robert take Mrs. Renzheimer's side against her? It was hard enough to stand out against one such opponent—

His greeting of Mrs. Renzheimer, though cordial, was by no means effusive. He was the first pastor that The Church on The Avenue had ever had whom his more powerful members hesitated to treat patronizingly, and of whom they stood a bit in awe. Mr. Leiter's letter which Robert had received three days before, had been the first deliberate attempt at bald dictation which the pastor had encountered. However, no occasion had hitherto arisen (Robert's sermons and general attitude having been quite satisfactorily neutral and unaggressive) to cause those who paid his salary to remind him of that fact.

"I'm so glad you have come in, Mr. Watts!—just at this crucial moment!" said Mrs. Renzheimer. "I'm sure *you* can persuade Mrs. Watts on which side her duty lies in this matter we have been discussing."

"She generally knows that without my help," said Robert blandly, slipping his arm about Jane's waist as they all stood. "What's the discussion?"

"Mrs. Watts, to my great surprise and pain, tells me she is not opposed to Miss Lawrence's being permitted to speak to-morrow afternoon at the Civic Club on the expulsion of the teachers!"

"Hm—m—mm!" murmured Robert musingly, stroking his chin.

"I feel sure, Mr. Watts, that *you* cannot think as your wife does about this?"

"Mrs. Watts and I don't think exactly alike about everything, but," he added jocularly, "we manage to worry through!"

"By respecting each other's right to think as we must," added Jane.

"But surely, Mr. Watts, you can point out to Mrs. Watts the very great mistake she would make if she supported Miss Lawrence to-morrow afternoon—instead of me—and my father!"

"We shall have to talk it over—eh, my dear?" said Robert, patting Jane's shoulder.

"I'll let it in your hands, then, Mr. Watts," said Mrs. Renzheimer, her eyes fixing her pastor with a steady determination that, more forcibly than words, put upon him the responsibility of his wife's vote at the Club. "You—and you alone—can save her from being blown about by every wind of doctrine—save her from the baleful influence of poor Miss Lawrence!"

"To save her from such a tragic fate," smiled Robert, "I'd sail through bloody seas! Leave her to me, Mrs. Renzheimer!"

"I'm sure you realize, Mr. Watts, the seriousness—" began Mrs. Renzheimer—but Jane suddenly spoke in.

"I'll have to leave you two to thresh it out—will you excuse me, Mrs. Renzheimer?—I've got to go and iron the parson's shirt!"

Robert restrained his impulse to grab and hold Jane by his side as she, with a friendly nod to her visitor, turned away; for he knew, from strenuous experiences, that a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Renzheimer was not a thing to be entered into lightly.

But Jane, ignoring his unspoken plea, relentlessly left him alone to grapple with the ordeal.

## CHAPTER VI

WHEN ten minutes later he came up-stairs, having failed to find Jane in the kitchen at the ironing-board, he discovered her in their bedroom, propped up comfortably against a pile of cushions in the window-seat, reading a novel.

"Why the fairy tale about ironing the parson's shirt?" he inquired, "inasmuch as you never do iron my shirts! I wouldn't let you iron my shirts!"

"You must say, 'I wouldn't *leave* you iron my shirts'—not *let* you—if you want to be a good Leitersviller. I thought it sounded wifely to talk about ironing your shirts. I'm sure Mrs. Renzheimer approves of a mid-Victorian wife at the Manse. You see, I'm trying to be a real helpmate, Husband dear! Tactful and genteel!"

"I'm glad you think Mrs. Renzheimer's approval desirable; it simplifies things. But I don't see the necessity for—prevaricating."

"To say 'lying' as applied to the minister's wife would not sound nice, would it? Well, you see, I've got to get *some* amusement out of the situation."

"The situation? What situation?"

"That of being the pastor's dootiful wife. How did you make out with Mrs. Renzheimer, Robert?"

"She and her father are certainly determined that Augusta shall not deliver that speech at the Civic Club! Look at this!"

He pointed out to her, as he sat down beside her in

the window-seat, the huge headlines on the front page of the morning newspaper, which he had brought upstairs.

PROTESTS BEING MADE BY ALL THE PATRIOTIC SOCIETIES OF LEITERSVILLE AGAINST MISS AUGUSTA LAWRENCE BEING ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO-MORROW BEFORE THE CIVIC CLUB IN BEHALF OF THE TEACHERS EXPELLED FOR DISLOYALTY.

PATRIOTIC LEGION POST OF LEITERSVILLE COMES OUT STRONG AGAINST PERMITTING MISS LAWRENCE TO SPEAK.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Jane, "how strong Augusta's following must be to make all this necessary!"

"Mrs. Renzheimer tells me," said Robert gravely, "that Judge Bergstresser has given his promise to a committee of the Civic Club that appealed to him yesterday, that he will not permit, in loyal, patriotic Leitersville, any disloyal or seditious utterances by any one, no matter what the injury to himself of opposing a young lady of such popularity as Miss Lawrence."

"When every one knows," said Jane, "that Judge Bergstresser is owned by Jacob Leiter!"

"I think the Judge only means to do his duty as he sees it!" protested Robert earnestly.

"As Jake Leiter tells him to see it!"

"He is courageously taking a stand not only against a very popular young woman, but against a large part

of the Club. It is a serious matter, my dear, to question the honesty of a judge of our courts! To intimate that he is bought!"

"I know it is. The Patriotic Legion would call it seditious and mob me. *Now* I do hope Augusta wins out! Don't you try to stop me, Robert, for I'm going to work for her!"

"You make a heroine of a girl who is simply seeking notoriety, by going against her own employer and against the best element in this city—the element that stands for everything that is good—for religion, education, order and propriety!"

"Mr. Jacob Leiter stands for education? Why, he is illiterate!"

"Doesn't he get a great orchestra here at his own expense, establish a library and a lecture course on Americanization?"

Jane laughed involuntarily. "Americanization! It is coming to mean submission of the masses to the capitalist's ideal!"

"Leitersville could have none of these educational things," declared Robert, "if it were not for Mr. Leiter."

"Of course it could not while Mr. Leiter vulgarly grabs all the profits of all the industries in the town! If the community owned its own industries, the community could buy its own concerts and libraries and lecturers and *respect* itself!"

"You talk wildly, foolishly, my dear!"

"Having teachers dismissed summarily for joining a federation, curtailing free speech at the Civic Club and in the pulpit,—is that standing for education, Robert?"



"Mr. Leiter is a keen and able man—if he is a little crude."

"Keen? Able? Of course he knows how many dollars make a million without looking it up. But intelligence—education—religion! A man whose aim in life has been profit and more profit, a feverish pursuit of dividends! It does not seem to me that the evil effects of such greediness can be counteracted by gifts of libraries, concerts, art galleries. Why, Robert, do you know scientists say that this covetousness is stamping itself on our national type of countenance? Why do you condone it, my dear?"

"I don't condone it."

"Well, you refuse to denounce it."

"Look here, Jane, you surely understand that if you support Augusta to-morrow you injure me. I can't believe that you will deliberately do this!"

"Are you asking me to act against my conscience, Robert?"

"Doesn't your conscience tell you to support your husband and his work?"

"Indeed it does and I think I would be faithless to just that if I opposed Augusta."

"That is sheer perversity, Jane! Our civilization, faulty as it is, is a Christian civilization and the best the world has ever known."

"But our religion proclaims that all men are brothers; it extols poverty and humility and emphasizes the danger, even the curse, of riches; and its ideal life is the life of service and self-sacrifice. And *look* at us!"

"Whose life is more filled with public service, with

hard, self-sacrificing labor, than that of our great financiers, our captains of industry—our own Jacob Leiter, for instance?

"Oh, Robert, you *know* society is organized to support the very opposite of everything Christianity really means. And the Church backs up society! Why, our chronic condition is that of economic civil war, filled with envy, hatred and all uncharitableness!"

"For goodness' sake keep such ideas to yourself or you'll ruin me!"

"It simply isn't in me to support Mr. Leiter's methods, Robert. Let's get another church!"

"It would be the same anywhere else. Do you think this whole matter—Augusta's speaking at the Club and the trouble about the teachers—of sufficient importance to justify your jeopardizing my position here? What good would Augusta's speech do?"

"Probably very little as over against such impregnable power as Mr. Leiter's. But there is such a thing in life, Robert, as standing for principles and ideals."

"Peace and love and loyalty to your husband seem to me about as good ideals as upsetting a community over a thing you can't mend anyway! I hate malcontents!"

"Was Jesus a malcontent in His day? And did He stir things up a bit? And George Washington and Martin Luther and Socrates and Savonarola and—"

"Oh, tut, tut, my dear!" interrupted Robert wearily. "What nonsense! All I ask of you—insist upon, in fact—is that you do consider my interests here and be very, very prudent."

Jane wondered how on earth she could steer her course next day between her plain duty to support Augusta and her husband's explicit request that she should not do so.

## CHAPTER VII

IT was that night at dinner with his father that Charles Leiter, just returned from a three days' business trip from New York, was told that the librarian whom he had recommended to his father had been, as the elder Leiter metaphorically put it, "fired."

Mrs. Renzheimer had mentioned to her father that Charles had been surprisingly "attentive" to the mischievous librarian; but to neither of them had it been thinkable that he could have any "serious intentions" towards a girl in Augusta's position. Charles was nothing if not ambitious and "exclusive."

"A lot of judgment you showed, Charlie, when you picked out *that* bird for me!" his father scoffed. "Funny you wouldn't *know* something about a candidate you recommend to me! A pretty mess you've got me into by foisting this firebrand of a woman on me! A Bolshevik!" he thundered, bringing his fist down upon the table so hard as to make the silver and china tingle. "No more, no less!"

"The vagaries of a mere girl!" retorted Charles in a bored tone. "Why should you bother about them? She can't hurt *you*!"

"Oh, she can't, can't she? She's raising the very dickens in this town! Trying to oust your sister Sally out of the Civic Club, inciting the school teachers to

join a Federation, threatening to make a seditious speech at the Civic Club—which of course I'll prevent—”

“Give her her speed till she's winded and she'll halt of her own accord. That would be *my* policy. You'd come out better.”

The father and son, seated at a glittering table in a spacious though ugly dining room, waited upon by a butler and a maid, bore no least resemblance to each other. Jacob Leiter, fat and red-faced, with an obstinate mouth, small, keen, but unintelligent eyes, a not unkindly countenance, looked his part—that of a typical American politician, a determined and unscrupulous money-maker; a man of humble birth who had never had time to catch up, in other values, with his wealth.

Charles, with an air and appearance of elegance, polish, fastidiousness, that contrasted grotesquely with his father's crudity; his capable white hands and shining nails in contrast with Jacob's red, rough, hairy fists; his correct evening dress before Jacob's business suit and gaudy tie; his clean-shaven face with its fine features, intelligent brow and thin, ironical lips, beside Jacob's common, pig-like head—presented one of the anomalies of American life—the advance of a second generation so far beyond its progenitors that the two could scarcely catch the sound of each other's voices.

In spite, however, of Charles' higher civilization, both natural and acquired, personally he was no less forceful than his father. At college he had been a leader in sports, in his classes, in his fraternity, in his clubs; and not alone because of his wealth. Just now he was prov-

ing himself an able legal adviser in his father's large affairs; and, being free from the need of money making, as his father in his youth had not been, and thus at liberty to disport his powers on a plane a bit above that of exploiters and speculators, he cultivated his native artistic tastes; he had a discriminating literary judgment, he was a connoisseur of pictures, he had an intelligent appreciation of music. A thinker he was not, nor an idealist. His opinion of human nature was far too cynical to allow him to feel any scruples about his father's business methods, which, as his attorney, he aided and abetted, though he clearly recognized the ethical, if not legal, rascality of them. It was the surface of life only that he scraped. There had been only two things in his whole career that had stirred him to the depths—his sense of outrage at his father's disreputable second marriage and his infatuation for Augusta Lawrence.

The home of Jacob Leiter on the edge of Leitersville, surrounded by a terraced lawn in front, flower gardens on either side, and a grove at the rear, was, naturally, the most pretentious in the town; spacious, highly expensive, showy, but neither beautiful nor remarkably comfortable. The care of it had always been a great burden to the first Mrs. Leiter because Jacob's great wealth had come to him faster than she had been able to grow up to it and she had never sufficiently overcome her native Pennsylvania Dutch frugality to employ the domestic force necessary for so large an establishment. The frivolous second Mrs. Leiter was balked by no such inhibition.

Charles detested his father's home; it offended his



taste and his pride and, when his loud step-mother was at home, deeply disgusted him.

"You must feel very insecure—you and your crowd," he said to his father, "to be so frightened of every weak little challenge of your power and privilege!"

"Weak? *Weak!* Why, this hussy's—"

"Stop!" Charles almost shouted, furious at such an epithet applied to the queenly girl enthroned in his imagination. His father stared in astonishment. His children did not use a tone of command to him! He had brought up his family, especially his only and loved son, in the old-fashioned "wholesome" awe of parental authority and Charles, in spite of his sense of superiority to his father, still retained so much of the old filial awe and submission, which had been deeply ingrained into him with the rod and other more or less harsh means characteristic of his arbitrary parent, that he generally bore himself with some deference towards him.

"Stop what? I like your tone, young man!"

"Beg pardon. Please don't refer to Miss—to a *lady*—as a 'hussy!' "

"I'll refer to her as I damned please, my boy! You needn't be so pernicketty nice! That's the trouble with you!" he added in an aggrieved tone, for in spite of all the worry and anxiety and rage that his second wife and her daughter caused him, he resented Charles' refusal to recognize them. "Too afraid of smutching yourself! I'd like to bat your head for coming home from New York without looking up my wife's daughter at the two addresses I gave you!"

Charles turned white to the lips and his eyes looked

like cold steel. "You surely didn't *expect* me to execute such a commission!" he asked cuttingly.

"I expected you to do what I ordered you to do!"

"I should think you'd understand by this time that I shall never permit your new domestic relations to touch my life!"

"It wouldn't o' hurt you, Charlie, to save me a trip to New York when I can't spare the time to go and you were right there on the ground. I got another bill to-day, if you please, for the young lady's debts! A mink coat this time! If I knew where she was! It wouldn't o' hurt you any to inquer at these two addresses! You wouldn't o' needed to see her—just to find out for me if she was there. Once I locate her, I'll soon stop her running up these ruinous bills on me! Even her mother don't know where she is and she's so worried that she's comin' home on the next boat!"

"What do *I* care? Why do you tell *me*?" demanded Charles chokingly.

"I've got to find the girl and stop her goings-on! If you won't help me as a son, help me as a lawyer! What can I *do*?"

"If you're unwilling to have any publicity, you can't do anything except to put a detective secretly on the job."

"I did, and he has been unable to find a trace of her! He couldn't even find a record of her studyin' at the Ayers Art School where I've been payin' for her ever since I married her mother! Looks as if the hussy's been deceivin' her mother and me and only pretendin' to study art, while usin' the money we sent her for her

art study in other ways! Can you beat it? If one of my own dotters had ever cut up like this I'd o' beat her and locked her up! I've ordered the detective to look up her record at Wellesley where her mother says she graduated in 1918."

"Miss Lawrence and Mrs. Watts are both Wellesley graduates—they might tell you something. By the way, how are you proposing to stop Miss Lawrence from delivering her speech to-morrow? I don't see how even you, father, can dictate to a member of the Civic Club what she shall think and say about anything, even about a matter that concerns you personally—which this teacher fracas is not supposed to do."

"Everything in Leitersville concerns me personally. Didn't I make this town what it is? I love it like I love my children; and its welfare is as near to my heart!"

Charles often felt a mingled wonder and amusement at his father's amazing belief in the purity of his own sentiments and motives; as for instance his pride in this town which he had made to grow and prosper about himself as the god-like source from which flowed forth all its activities, giving back to him a hundred times what he had bestowed upon it—fine town!—and his sentimental devotion to The Church On The Avenue where for forty years he had "worshiped"—and ruled—being naïvely unaware of any inconsistencies in his religious professions.

"Look here, father," said Charles anxiously, "you're not going to take any extreme measures, are you, if Miss Lawrence persists in making her speech? Any rough handling?"

"She's not going to deliver her speech—I promise you! I'm making it impossible."

"You'd have to call out the police to stop her! And even you, father, would draw the line there, I suppose!"

"Not there nor anywheres! She'll not make that speech!"

"Is the truth so very dangerous to you?"

"The truth!" scoffed Jacob. "She's going to be taught that she can't come to this town and run it!"

"She doesn't want to run it, she only wants to urge the citizens to run it themselves and to prevent such high-handed doings as the dismissing of those teachers."

"Yes, upholding a bunch of teachers in joining the Federation of Labor, when I, her employer, have spent near all my life keeping that pesky American Federation of Labor from getting into this town! I won't *leave* them get a foothold here, Charlie, no matter what I got to do to stop it! I believe in the principle of the Open Shop!" he maintained with a virtuous air. "I'm an American and I believe in the freedom of the individual, in the right of a man to work for who and for what he pleases and not at the dictation of a walking delegate!"

"You and the other employers who say that mean the right of a man to work for *you* when you want him to; not in his right to a job when you don't need him; you mean you believe in your right to break up organizations of labor."

"But the Unions deny what they call a 'scab' the right to work when he and his family may be in need!"

"Just now six millions of men are being denied the right to work and it isn't labor unions that are debarring

them. It's only when *Unions* hinder a man's working that you call it an infringement of his rights, isn't it? You capitalists debar him not only from work, but from land, tools, machinery and a control of industry."

"My men have it better than some Union laborers. *I* don't see why they should be discontented!"

"Because they see the huge productiveness of these works, knowing themselves to be the agents of this production; and they see that however much larger their wages than formerly, they nevertheless do not get a fair share of the profits; less, indeed, than ever before."

"Aw, well, no matter how high we raised their wages they'd howl for more!"

"Well, you howl for more, don't you? And you get it, too. Your gains are piling mountains high! And still you howl for more. At least the laborer doesn't get millions more than he can use!"

"*You* haven't any kick coming—near all I have will be yourn evenshally—unless you turn into a parlor Bolshevist! That's what you sound like! You best watch yourself a little!"

"It's you capitalists that need to watch out!"

"Aw, I don't see Bolshevism getting a hold in this country! We're too firmly intrenched. It ain't got a chance!"

"There are some forces at work, Father, which you and your class will not see!"

"I can see most things that are worth seein'. However," he added, leaning back in his chair and folding his fat hands on his protruding stomach, while they waited for the next course, "you can have a try at making

me see if you want to—if you won't be *too* deep!—though I must say, Charlie, I think you take laboring people too serious. They're just naturally dissatisfied. They don't take interest in their work."

"Why should they? It's not their work. You can't expect fine work from men who have no personal stake in the work. Make a man a partner in his work and you'll see him hustle. Your own Christ spoke, you know, of the hireling shepherd who flees and the owner who loves his sheep."

"They do have a stake—wages and holding down their jobs."

"The lowest possible motive for good work. To be sure, I personally think that the masses get just about what they deserve for *permitting* a limited group to own the property of the whole nation—a group that works for its own interests against the public welfare; that blocks progress; that exacts mammoth profits at the expense of the people; that cows public opinion and gags truth-tellers! If the people were on to your methods!—wow!"

"Now, now, Charlie, wasn't it under Capitalism that men's wages mounted higher than they ever were before?" demanded his father.

Charles laughed. "To-day six millions of laborers are in want in the United States, though Nature provides enough for all. Society is beginning to see that *poverty need not exist!* You capitalists thwart Nature's lavishness and fatten on the weak. These millions of unemployed are helpless victims of your system. You are social highwaymen!"

"A highwayman yet! I guess my own son is about



the only person in Leitersville that don't think me a very consistent Christian!"

"Does the Reverend Clement Calloway think you a good Christian?"

Leiter's face grew red with anger at the mention of that name. "The Reverend Calloway may not know it, but he's diggin' a pit under his own feet, lightin' into my affairs the way he's doin'! That man's crazy! He's sick!"

"Yes, he does seem to have contracted a strong case of Christianity!"

"His own church is threatenin' to kick him out!"

"I know. The Church is tolerant, but it can't stand real Christianity—that's going too far!"

"Aw, shut up!" exclaimed Mr. Leiter vulgarly.

"Does your pastor, Mr. Watts, think you a good Christian, father?"

"Well, he don't tell *me* if he don't!"

"Ask him some time straight—whether he thinks you live up to the Christian standard in business—and please tell me his answer!"

"His definition of the Christian standard in business might not tally with yours; he's got some common sense!"

"He could not deny that the Christian standard would force you to put into all your business deals the spirit of your God, Jesus," smiled Charles.

"Now, Charlie, that ain't practical! It's fanatical! It's ak-shally comic!"

"Then why do you support a Church whose Founder was not practical, but fanatical?"

"Our Savior didn't live in the twentieth century, Charlie! Don't be a nut!"

"But if His teachings are obsolete, why keep up the Church?"

"You can't deny that the Church is an influence for good?"

"I don't think it's an influence for anything; it's too weak to be. It's not that it is definitely bad; it's so damned neutral! It's dying of dry rot! A minister that's *got* any Christianity, like Calloway, is called a fanatic and driven out. The so-called successful ministers are the ones that wouldn't dream of being so eccentric as actually to ask people to apply Christianity to daily life—especially to business."

"That ain't so! Reverend Watts always preaches practical sermons. Noted for it! Look here!"

Mr. Leiter drew from his vest pocket a printed slip of paper. "Here's Reverend Watts' sermon subjects for the month, morning and evening. Now you see if they ain't practical!"

He read off the topics impressively; "*Taking God at His Word; The Work of the Holy Ghost in the Believer; How to Treat Scoffers; The Mormon Peril; Get Right With God; The Comfort of the Scriptures; The Gospel's Glorious Invitation; The Power of Jesus' Name; The Call to Worship; Our Numbered Hairs; Joyful Religion.* Now ain't they perfectly practical, sensible subjects?"

"No; sentimental idiocy! Mr. Calloway's themes, however, are so practical as to be dangerous! I'm told he talks about such things as *Christianizing the Social Order; The Economic Basis for Human Brotherhood;*

*The Ethics of Commercialism; The Evolution of the Working Class*—things like that!”

Mr. Leiter's face looked apoplectic. “No wonder his members are leaving his church and comin’ to ourn! *The Evolution of the Working Class!* What’s that but encouragin’ strikes and unrest? *The Ethics of Commercialism!* What’s commercialism got to do with religion?” he naïvely demanded. “Why don’t Calloway keep to his job and preach the Gawspel?”

“That’s what he claims he’s doing. I think myself he’s the only minister in this town that isn’t a fakir! The only genuine Christian.”

“A genuine fool!” cried his father furiously. “Leitersville’s sick of him and his reforms!”

“He does have a following, however.”

“A rabble! His own respectable church members don’t follow him!”

“Because they’re either self-deceived or hypocritical! The fact is, the Church refuses to tolerate real Christianity in its ministers. The intelligent ministers that are tolerated are usually sleek and slick rascals! The good sincere ones that keep their churches are stupid and ignorant! That’s the Church of to-day!”

“You’ve no business standing up for Calloway! He’s been working against me ever since he came to Leitersville!”

“Not against you personally. Against the things you do.”

“Against my business interests, Charlie! Those *Resolutions* he’s tryin’ to get the ministers to sign are a *direct* slap at me!”

"You slapped him first—with your Open Letter!"

"*My* Open Letter?"

"You are the president of the Employers' Association that published the Open Letter."

"Look here, Charlie, why are you taking sides with every one that works against me?" his father asked in mingled anger and distress.

"I'm not—since it's to my interests that you should stick. But if I were one of the proletariat I would surely feel I had a righteous cause to fight for! Until the proletariat do feel that, they're not worth more than they get. *I* should worry!"

"Calloway's got no common sense!" Leiter exploded indignantly. "And Christianity without common sense is fanaticism! Now there's Reverend Watts—" He calmed down at that soothing name. "Reverend Watts he uses some *judgment!*"

They left the table and went for their coffee into the room which Mrs. Leiter called, by courtesy, "the li'bry," the reason not being apparent, since the Leiters, with the exception of Charles, not being readers, "the li'bry" contained no books.

"I'm sure, father," said Charles as they sipped their coffee, "you would come out a lot better in this row with Miss Lawrence if you would drop it right here and let her alone. You can't fight a woman as you would fight a man!"

"When the woman fights me as a man would, I shan't leave her *sex* stop me! That's final, Charlie. Enough said. Miss Lawrence has met her match!"

Charles, shrugging his shoulders, swallowed his coffee, set down his cup and abruptly left the room.

He went at once to the telephone and called up Augusta's apartment.

"May I run round to see you, Augusta? I'm just home from New York— All right. I'm curious to hear the story of your adventurous young life from last Monday up to date! You seem to have been making history in Leitersville!—Yes? By Jove! Well, I've some history of my own to flaunt! You're not the only one—don't flatter yourself!—Ah? I shall be with you in fifteen minutes! Meantime consider yourself embraced!"

He quickly hung up the receiver before she could answer this impertinence, but he could see her, in his mind's eye, stiffen at what she would consider vulgar light-mindedness. He loved to assault her dignity impudently—at a safe distance. How could mere human beings take themselves so solemnly and never be troubled with the shadow of a doubt of Almighty God's taking them as seriously as they took themselves! It was because they had no sense of humor; Augusta, for instance, was more apt to be irritated than amused by the idiosyncrasies of a person like his sister, Sally Renzheimer. Now there was that delectable bit of femininity, Mrs. Robert Watts,—she had quite a gratifying sense of humor—so much so that he often wondered how she contrived not to see her reverend husband as rather a joke, with his suave manner of compromise for the sake of harmony and safety, rather than for his Christian Gospel.

Charles felt that Augusta's opinion of himself was that he was flippant. Sometimes he thought it an evidence of stupidity to be anything else in a world so ridiculous!

When a quarter of an hour later he was shaking hands with her at the door of her tiny apartment, she told him, as she led the way to her sitting-room, "You wouldn't find me here—I should have packed and gone at once—but that I'm waiting to deliver my speech to-morrow afternoon at the Civic Club!"

As they sat down in two wicker chairs before the fire place in which a log was cheerfully blazing, Charles' eyes feasted upon her young loveliness, for which, for three interminable days, he had been hungering.

"No, my dear," he slowly shook his head, "my father has decided that you are not to deliver that speech. Therefore, the speech will certainly not be delivered! Do you really imagine, fond, deceived child, that you can fight Jacob Leiter?"

"I'm remaining over to-morrow to deliver my speech," repeated Augusta. "What's your history that you want to flaunt? Got your degree?"

Charles rose and bowed low. "You behold in me, my child, a Doctor of Laws as well as a Ph.D."

"How can one of such tender years bear up under all that?"

"I'm trying my best to look modest, but it's not easy!"

"Impossible, apparently."

"Well, why should I look modest? Have I anything to look modest about, when you come to think of it?"

"Yes, you have! You ought to blush for yourself for



being so handsome! A man hasn't any business to be as good-looking as you are!"

"I wouldn't be so good-looking if I could help it, darling! I've tried hard to overcome this fault. I've always considered myself too ornate. But, reluctantly changing this thrilling theme, let me warn you, Augusta, that I fear my paternal ancestor will balk at nothing he may be obliged to do to prevent your speaking at the Club to-morrow. Why, I'm sure J. L. wouldn't hesitate to have you arrested for sedition! Actually!"

"That might be an interesting experience! Fear of handcuffs and dungeons won't stop me!"

"You cannot seriously mean that you'd go to jail for love of the unwashed proletariat?" demanded Charles.

"They wouldn't be unwashed if our class permitted them leisure and money to be clean."

"You deceive yourself, Augusta; you don't care any more than I do that they are submerged, exploited and practically enslaved, though you think you do. I frankly admit that for my own convenience I prefer to have them remain submerged—during my time on earth anyway. All the same, I'm not blind and I recognize that the world isn't static, however much we who happen to be on top may wish it to be so. I recognize that the history of civilization is the history of the growth of democracy, and that the next step in this growth seems to be the abolition of special privilege and the establishment of equal opportunity for all. My hating such a change doesn't close my eyes to its inevitability. But to be willing to go to jail to help it on! Not me! Nor you

either! Be sensible, dear girl, and don't waste yourself trying to fight a man like J. L. Naturally I'd hate to have him injure you!"

"I'm so glad," said Augusta thoughtfully, "that there's one minister in Leitersville who refuses to be cowed by your father and his gang!"

"Mr. Calloway certainly takes chances!" shrugged Charles.

"He isn't counting the cost!"

"But he'll pay it just the same!"

"I wonder what costs the popular type of minister will have to pay!" Augusta speculated, her chin on her bent fingers; "the popular pastor who always keeps to the safe middle course, never stands out for an unpopular ideal, holds a perfectly neutral and negative attitude towards social wrongs in high places, trims his sails to meet the breath of the rich supporters of his church!"

"Meaning the Reverend Robert Watts?" asked Charles.

"You know that type of minister," said Augusta, ignoring his question, "with his exemplary moral life, and pleasing personality, seems to me very harmful!"

"He isn't so harmful to himself, however, as the Calloway type. Watts won't have any costs to pay!"

"In impoverishment of the spirit?" suggested Augusta.

"How about your friend, Mrs. Watts—do you think she'll fight for you to-morrow afternoon at the Club, or merely refrain from fighting against you?"

"She's very devoted to Robert. If she openly stood for me, could Mr. Watts remain in Leitersville?"

"I'm afraid he couldn't."

"Jane knows that. It's an awfully hard position for her," said Augusta sympathetically.

"You can't blame her if she keeps quiet, Augusta."

"I'm afraid her merely keeping quiet can't save her, for your sister, Mrs. Renzheimer, is determined to enlist Jane's activity on her side."

"Confound. Sally! What are your plans, Augusta, when you leave here?"

"There's some journalism open to me—I don't know," she said evasively.

"In New York?"

"Ye—yes," she reluctantly admitted.

"Good! I shall be going back to New York myself directly—as soon as my father's wife lands here," he added in the hard tone in which he always referred to that redoubtable person. "She's coming on the next boat."

"Oh! I—I thought she was going to stay in Paris several months longer!" said Augusta rather breathlessly.

"I thought so too."

"What—what made her change her plans?"

Charles had a passing vague surprise at her evidently keen interest in the question. "Father says she's coming back to find her daughter who seems to be mislaid!" he answered with an ironical lift of his brows. "We had a regular row at dinner because I didn't execute a commission in New York he gave me—to look up this missing damsel! Fancy his expecting I would!"

Augusta, staring at him, wide-eyed, made no comment.

"He's been getting the most awful bills for furs and

jewels that the girl has bought and charged to him!"

Augusta rose abruptly to push her chair back from the blazing fire, murmuring something about its being too hot—and Charles sprang up to move it for her.

"I'm surprised," he continued when they were seated again, "that even so tough-skinned a man as my father could have really expected me to do that errand for him in New York!—to consent to any contact whatever with these disgusting people he's tied himself to! You see I've a triple horror of that girl—because of my hatred of her mother, because of the detestable things I know about her and because—"

"What are they—the detestable things?"

"Why, I've told you—swindling my father, hiding herself from him, but conniving with her mother in trying to meet me in New York, because they think I'm a matrimonial prize!—the girl's mad extravagances—I see," he cut himself off abruptly, "that you think me unnecessarily harsh!"

Charles realized that until he had met Augusta he had never troubled himself as to what any young girl thought of him. His concern had been rather to elude their too great approval of him, their hunting him down! It had been Augusta's surprising indifference, almost amounting to avoidance, that had interested and lured him. To have discovered a poor, self-supporting girl of unknown family who, unlike the young women of his acquaintance, was, although beautiful, not a man-hunter, but so feverishly interested in life in so many directions as to regard the attentions of men a minor matter—the novelty of this proved, for him, irresistible.

"But, you see," he elucidated his reason for his aversion to his father's step-daughter, "Mrs. Leiter is so determined to throw her daughter at my head that she's kept me dodging ever since I've known her! God knows," he suddenly burst out, indignant with himself, "why I thrust these loathsome domestic details on your attention! I'm certainly not in the habit of airing them! By the way!"

He leaned towards her across a small table that stood between them. "What years were you at Wellesley?"

"From 1913 to 1918," she answered mechanically, listlessly. "Why?"

"Then you must have known my father's step-daughter there—she graduated in 1918—so I've heard her mother say."

Augusta stiffened and was silent a moment before she asked with a bored air, "What was her name?"

"Barbara Harrell."

Augusta nodded. "Oh, yes, I knew her; you do well to dodge and elude her! She's very dangerous! If once she succeeds in running you down!"—she laughed a bit hysterically—"you won't be able to help yourself at all! So do keep on running!"

"Make fun of me if you want to!" said Charles sulkily. He rather considered irony his special prerogative and did not fancy having it turned against himself. "What puzzles me is how four years at so exemplary an institution as Wellesley College didn't discipline that girl into something less disreputable!"

"Yes, I've never before heard of anything so lurid coming out of Wellesley!"

"Just what does that heavy irony mean, my dear? Is the girl really not so bad? But," he abruptly added, "I'm not, as a matter-of-fact, in the least interested. If she were an angel from heaven I'd detest her because she was her mother's daughter! To be sure, I do wish father could get his hands on her and stop her piling up huge debts that he has to pay and—"

"Oh!"

"Why—what's the matter?"

Augusta, her face flushed, her eyes very bright, drew a long, deep breath. "Life is so queer!" She laughed. "But that sounds like your sister, Mrs. Renzheimer, doesn't it!"

Charles winced. Though his sister often embarrassed him, he was fond of her; and though he might laugh at her himself, he didn't enjoy hearing others do so. He thought Augusta rather rude and unfeeling.

"Fiction is queerer!" he retorted. "Ever read D. H. Lawrence or Henry James or Elsie Dinsmore?"

"Or Erik Dorn or Cytherea," she added rather eagerly changing the subject. "I wonder what is the real significance underlying all these recent outbursts in literature, of sex revolt!" she went on hurriedly, as though determined to keep him from reverting to his family. "Is it degeneracy or a fine and noble emancipation? I've tried so hard to become broad-minded on the sex question—by reading Balzac and Bernard Shaw and De-Maupassant and even the life of George Sand! No use. I remained unscathed! Virtuous in my inmost thoughts! Can't help it!" she ended apologetically.

"You needn't apologize to me," said Charles. "Look-



ing on at my father's experiences has made me a hide-bound conservative on the marriage question."

Augusta looked annoyed at this persistent return to the unpleasant subject of his step-relation. "All these modern treatises (called novels)" she resolutely turned back to an impersonal theme, "treat of some man in middle life who, being superior to the average contented animal, suddenly breaks away from the crushing monotony and deadening futility of his secure, jog-trot course of life, and goes forth to seek satisfaction for his starved and hungry soul and body in paths which society has always called 'sinful—' "

"Are you practicing your Civic Club speech on me?" inquired Charles politely.

"If I talked like that before the Leitersville Civic Club, I would be arrested sure enough! I was going to add, very thoughtfully, when you interrupted me, that the mad unrest, dissatisfaction and despair these men in novels feel, is not, I am sure, as they imagine, because of their irksome 'home ties' and stultifying environment generally, but because of their own spiritual poverty—and I am sure that however far and wide they may seek surcease of their sorrow and yearning in external change and diversion, they'll not find it—because it cannot be satisfied from without. The moral is, young man, enrich your mind and soul—guard it from dry rot—and then middle age won't find you sterile and empty!"

"But in these novels it's always the highly superior type of man that breaks away from the jog-trot—the ones that *have* enriched their natures."

"Intellectually, not spiritually."

“And spiritual enrichment will make them satisfied with conventional marriage?”

Augusta looked baffled. “I can’t get my bearings in this most transitional of all ages!” she said despairingly. “I can’t make out whether we’re drifting—can any one? Can—”

A ring at the door of her apartment interrupted her.

## CHAPTER VIII

**C**HARLES realized, while he stood waiting for her to return from answering the bell, how nervously anxious he was as to the lengths to which his father might go—was this some “officer of justice” calling here at half past nine to warn her?

She returned, followed by the tall, lean, but compactly built figure of the Reverend Clement Calloway. Charles, who had never met the rector, felt a bit of curiosity as to this man whom his father so hated—and feared. It must be his father’s guilty conscience that made him fear a fellow so impotently situated—rector of the Leitersville parish! And anyway, couldn’t his father see that any man who persisted as Calloway did, in forging ahead on a line of quite impracticable ideals, would always be down and out?—would never hold a place of influence,—except perhaps after his death! It was this realization of Calloway’s unimportance that tempered Charles’ quick, instinctive jealousy at seeing so personable a man, with a bearing so exotic to Leitersville, here in Augusta’s apartment. A man playing so losing a game could not be his rival for a stunning woman like Augusta—except that—(and here Charles felt a faint pang of apprehension) Augusta was apparently so very unworldly; blindly so; she didn’t see values in right proportion at all; something of a visionary; lacked balance. Yes, there lay

the danger of her acquaintance with a fanatic like this Calloway—

For a while after they were all seated, Augusta and the rector had so much to say to each other that Charles felt himself rather awkwardly "out of it." It was evident from the intimate tone of their talk that they had met several times before. Charles thought he had never seen Augusta's face so alight with interest and—yes, happiness. Come to think of it, she didn't usually look happy. He could not entertain the idea that Calloway's mere presence was responsible for this illumined countenance—though the rector was, he had to admit, impressive—with his lean, strong face, his tense, forceful manner, his utterly winning smile, his air and manner of breeding and culture. Surely, however, it was not the man himself, but rather the matter they were so earnestly discussing, which animated Augusta so unwontedly.

Mr. Calloway was warning her of the ordeal before her next day at the hands of those women of the Civic Club that would oppose her.

"I gather from many signs, Miss Lawrence, that they are going to put up a very stiff fight to prevent your speaking—and I'm glad to say they'll be met by a determination equal to their own—a determination to establish the right of free discussion at the Club. Now if the loss of your library position is distressing you, I'm afraid the additional strain to-morrow will tax you too much?" he asked solicitously.

"I'm not in the least distressed, for I never expected, after I saw how things were in Leitersville, to be able to hold my position here. I knew I could not live here

and not protest against some things which it's not wholesome to criticize in this locality."

"Nor in any other locality. Leitersville is ruled by the same principles that rule everywhere to-day. If more of our ministers were as ready as you've been, Miss Lawrence, to jeopardize their jobs for the sake of the right, the Church wouldn't be so dead! Do you feel, then, that you are equal to what you'll have to go through to-morrow? It will take resolution, you know!"

"I'm ready."

"For the sake of those courageous women who are depending on you, I'm very glad that you are resolved to stick it out!"

Charles here spoke in, his tone to Mr. Calloway instinctively, not intentionally, rather condescending, for he definitely thought of him as an inferior. "You will really be kinder to Miss Lawrence if you dissuade her from speaking to-morrow, since my father is so determined she shall not. I don't defend my father—of course not—but you know how unpleasant he can—and unfortunately will—make it for any one who acts against him. Miss Lawrence's friends surely don't want her to expose herself—"

"If we could only realize that in a matter like this no one can harm us but ourselves, through our weakness, cowardice, unfaithfulness to what light we have—"

Mr. Calloway scarcely turned to Charles as he spoke and his tone and manner were negligent, inattentive. Charles was accustomed, especially in Leitersville, and especially from "little men" (as he considered clergymen) to some deference. He felt piqued.

"All the same, Mr. Calloway," said Augusta lightly, "I'll need your prayers! I've heard it said that 'the prayers of the righteous man availeth much.'"

"Then why don't you ask for mine?" inquired Charles, seeking to divert that radiant glance from the rector's face to himself.

"Please note—'the prayers of the righteous man,'" said Augusta.

"I've a clean, exemplary record!" protested Charles.

"For taking good care of yourself!" smiled Augusta. "Don't give me too much credit," she turned back to Mr. Calloway, "for moral courage. You see, I've so little at stake—no family dependent on me, no one to grieve or be disgraced by what I do (if it comes to going to jail!) except, perhaps, dear little Jane Watts! Whom, by the way, you've spoiled irreparably," she accused the rector "by telling her she looked like Anna the Prophetess! She now goes about with her hair parted in the middle, trying to look mediæval and demure and saintly and only succeeding in looking like Theda Bara!"

"I'm sure," protested Calloway, "she could never achieve that!"

Charles, feeling superfluous, rose abruptly to make his adieus, expecting Augusta to protest—upon which he might possibly consent to remain. But when, far from objecting to his going, she almost eagerly bade him good-night, the sense of injury he felt was indeed a novelty in his experiences with girls.

On his way home, however, he realized that he had made a tactical mistake in abandoning the field to his rival, if such Calloway actually was.



Charles had known for some time that he intended to marry Augusta. He wished that she knew it also, but thus far she had held him at a distance from which a proposal of marriage would have been impracticable, if not ridiculous!

He could never have imagined himself in a plight like this in his relations to a girl—uncertain, hesitating, held off at arm's length. Yes, quite literally at arm's length. She had never let him kiss her. Unlike modern girls, she wasn't given to promiscuous kissing, he was glad to know. It was only over the telephone that he dared to speak of embracing her. He respected her as much as he adored her.

When he reached home, his father informed him that as soon as this fracas at the Civic Club was over he was going to New York to meet his wife.

"Her ship gets in on Friday. I'll go a day ahead and try to find her daughter, Barbara."

"If you are going to bring that girl here," began Charles—

"You'll clear out? Well, you'd leave anyway when Katy comes home! About time you got over your nonsense about my wife, I'll say!"

"Your late librarian, Miss Lawrence—"

"Better call her *your* librarian," muttered his father. "What about her?"

"—knew your step-daughter at Wellesley."

"I wish I had a photograph of the hussy to help me in my search for her! In Katy's room I could find only this—" He drew from his breast pocket an old-fashioned "cabinet" photograph and held it so directly under

Charles' eyes that, whether he wished to or not, he could not help seeing it. But the face on the card caught and instantly held his attention. It was the head and shoulders of a child of six, with cropped, banged, yellow, curly hair, large, soft, wistful eyes with a look of premature intelligence and suffering, a fine, sensitive mouth, a fragile delicacy about the face—

"Can you imagine an angelic lookin' kid like that growin' up to be such a devil?" demanded Leiter.

"She couldn't! Impossible!"

"Aw, anything's possible with a female! To be sure, I guess Katy wasn't the best mother in the world for a fine little kiddie like that—"

"This can't be her daughter! It's too exquisite!"

"Read for yourself—on the back."

Charles turned the photograph and read, "Barbara Harrell, aged six."

Again he examined the face and it dawned upon him that there was something oddly, uncannily familiar about it. He felt he had surely seen it somewhere before—and been impressed by it. It wasn't in the least probable that he ever had—and yet—

He gave it back—almost reluctantly—to his father.

As he went early and drearily to bed that night, he decided, for two reasons, to remain in Leitersville as long as Augusta remained, even if his stay had to lap over the time of his step-mother's return. One reason was that he didn't propose to abandon Augusta to Cal-loway's possible attentions. The other was that, to his own self-disgust, he found himself absurdly curious to

see whether any least trace of that truly lovely child of the photograph remained in the wild, unscrupulous young woman whom his father would probably bring home from New York with his wife.



### PART III

“I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER’S BUSINESS.”





## CHAPTER I

THE excitement in Leitersville over the expulsion of the teachers was greatly enhanced by the controversy between the two factions of the Civic Club upon the question of allowing Miss Augusta Lawrence to make a speech on the subject at an open mass meeting.

On Thursday afternoon the Club auditorium was packed, while the corridors and stairways and even the street outside were crowded with excited women who struggled for admittance, to witness the drama which was sure to take place.

In the entire house there were only a few dozens of men—among them several policemen.

In a little room off the speaker's platform where she could hear all that went on, Augusta serenely awaited the decision of the Club as to whether she should be allowed to speak.

The meeting was opened by the President, Mrs. Renzheimer, who requested the secretary, Miss Specht, to lead in prayer. (In Leitersville they opened Club meetings with prayer.) Miss Susan Specht was so ardent a Feminist that she always referred to God as "She"—"In God's own good time, She knows best."

Mrs. Renzheimer, following the prayer with a request to the vice-president to take the Chair and let her address the meeting, made a plea against the dangers of free speech, in which, with an air of giving the world new,

fresh ideas, she impressively pronounced, among other things, "Our world is not a perfect world"; "To think requires both time and effort"; "The opinions we hold should be correct opinions"; "Our opinions should always show our respect, not our disloyalty, towards our American institutions"; "Radical opinions will break down the old sturdy, reliable virtues of American manhood and womanhood"; "It is the duty of public school teachers to teach patriotism"; "Authority has the sanction of the Creator."

It was the unadulterated purity of such sentiments as these that had earned for Mrs. Renzheimer the reputation in Leitersville of being "intellectual"; her satellites this afternoon sincerely believed that her long, incoherent, meaningless ramble was both eloquent and unanswerable.

The stormy debate that followed lasted nearly an hour. From time to time Augusta was visited, where she waited, by some of her ardent supporters.

Jane Watts, seated near the middle of the great auditorium, tense with suspense, heard with mingled annoyance and amusement the remarks made to her every now and then by an indignant Pennsylvania Dutch matron sitting next to her; a woman whose husband's financial and political influence, and not her own social graces, had secured her membership in the exclusive Civic Club. "What for should we leave Miss Lawrence tell us what's what, when she don't even live here—she comes from else!" "We oughtn't to leave her speak her piece! But like they did in San Francisco last week, the school board give them the choice of resigning school or A. F. L., as

you can read in the *Morning Gazette*." "He that is not for is against," she said darkly, if vaguely—for or against what, not being specified, but left to the imagination.

Mrs. Renzheimer's speech was followed by that of Miss Fanny Finkelbinder who spoke feelingly, if not with conspicuous originality, of the teacher's responsibility towards the young whom she was "equipping for that solemn hour when they must embark upon the sea of life."

"We don't want our dear Civic Club," she said, "to become, under certain lamentable influences, which we need not name more directly, the seat of Bolshevism and Socialism! We must make it *American!*" (as who should say, "We must make it divine!") "We cannot tolerate in this Club any defense of the public school teachers who work against Americanization by joining the A. F. L. which is always upsetting the foundations of American business and making it insecure. *Americanization* must be our watchword for our Club, our teachers, our school-children-the-hope-of-the-nation, and our foreign laborers!"

Up to this point in the meeting not one of Augusta's supporters had been able to get recognition from the Chair. But now, a resolute woman, Miss Addie Johnson, pretending to think that she *had* been recognized (when Mrs. Renzheimer had distinctly pronounced the name of a very young lady who had risen immediately after Miss Addie Johnson) talked up in a voice that drowned out the very young lady.

"May I suggest," said Miss Johnson in a loud voice, "that to humanize, rather than Americanize, our Club,

our teachers, our school-children-the-hope-of-the-nation, might be more desirable?"

"Do you question," asked the President in a tone and with a look of sorrowful disapproval, "that the American ideal of manhood and womanhood is the highest in the world?"

"How do we know that it is? Do we know by personal experience with men and women of other nations, or are we merely prejudiced?" asked Miss Addie Johnson.

"Prejudiced!" exclaimed Mrs. Renzheimer in righteous indignation. "*Well*, Miss Johnson, it is at least everywhere *conceded* to be the highest!"

"By Americans."

"Are you throwing mud at your own nation, Miss Johnson?" an outraged member of the Club, springing to her feet, demanded.

"I see no advantage in persuading ourselves that we are better than we really are. Judging from the average intelligence, as to questions of public interest, of the man on the street—the shop-clerk, the grocer, butcher, baker, car-conductor, I cannot see why any one thinks that the citizen produced by the American system is such a superior product. It seems to me that the foreigners that come to America don't need any more improving than do Americans of all classes. We can learn quite as much from them as they can learn from us."

"That, Miss Johnson, verges dangerously, I should say, upon the unpatriotic!" warned her opponent. And it was just at this instant that the audience was electrified by the sudden appearance, upon the platform, of

Police Inspector, Samuel Kolbensschlag, a burly, red-haired, freckled Pennsylvania Dutchman.

As he moved to the edge of the stage, his eyes fixing Miss Johnson where she stood, a silence as of death fell upon the great throng of people.

Miss Johnson sank into her seat.

"Well," began the conserver of law and order, "I guess we can manage to worry through a while longer without seeking *our* education from any filthy Dagoes or Hun-kies!"

He paused. No one ventured to answer him. The silence was breathless. After a moment he continued.

"I've come here to speak to you ladies of the Civic Club in regards to the speech scheduled to come off here to-day which I advise you to forbid. I appeal to you ladies who represent the best element in our city, the promoters of its high culture, its high ideals, to refuse this platform this afternoon to one who is firstly, I regret to say, but I've got it on good authority, a free-thinker in religion. That is to say, she don't believe in the Bible. Now a lady that don't believe in the Bible—well, how does it *look* anyhow? I don't need to say any more on *that* subject to our Leitersville Christian ladies! Secondly, she's neither loyal nor patriotic—she's been known to pass remarks against the institutions of her own native land. Thirdly, she's an anarchist, upholding public servants who defy those in authority over them,—namely, the public school teachers who defied the school board by joining the American Federation of Teachers. Fourthly, she's an I. W. W. and an extreme radical—and we all know how dangerous to our American institutions, which

we all love and under which has grown up our great Prosperity, greater than that of any nation in the world!—we all know, I say, how dangerous to these free institutions are radicalism and the doctrines of the I. W. W.”

A courageous woman, Mrs. Yingling, rose to say she knew Miss Lawrence was not an I. W. W. and asked Mr. Kolbenschlag what evidence he had to justify such a statement.

He replied that he was here to state facts, not to waste his time and that of the “Club ladies” in producing *evidence* of his facts; and that the “Club ladies” would be very wise indeed if they accepted his facts and *acted* on them.

“I believe it is highly praiseworthy in the school board to say that no propaganda for the A. F. L. dare exist in the schools of Leitersville, I believe the A. F. L. as represented in the recent steel and other strikes, is the most powerful factor for the continued disturbance in this country to-day. Even the President of the United States hastened to do its bidding on one occasion. Because of the A. F. L. business men sometimes cannot transport their merchandise! Think of that! The head of the steel strike has the same principles as Trotzky of Russia!

“So we trust to this Club of women (Gawd bless ’em!) to forbid any speech in this auditorium that would tend to undermine our free American institutions!”

He bowed and retired from the platform, followed by loud applause from what seemed to be about half the audience.



Mrs. Renzheimer rose, wearing her sweetest, blandest smile, and came to the edge of the platform.

"Will the members now please get ready to vote?" she asked tenderly. "And in the interim, while slips of paper are being distributed for your votes, Professor Beistline will favor us with a few incidental selections, which he will render on the piano."

It was during the "rendering" of Professor Beistline's "incidental selections" that Jane, her nerves keyed to a high pitch, felt sharply how the atmosphere about her had changed since the appearance of the formidable Police Inspector. It was perfectly evident that the number of Augusta's supporters was falling off. It was a crucial moment and if something were not done immediately to turn the tide and restore courage to the advocates of free discussion, the majority would certainly vote against it and the Club would, in Jane's eyes, have failed to vindicate its existence.

Her heart beating fast, she rose the moment Professor Beistline had concluded his third "incidental selection" and drew to herself the attention of the Chair.

Mrs. Renzheimer recognized her very graciously, for of course she knew it to be inconceivable that Mrs. Watts should do anything so suicidal as to oppose her and her father—especially after the impressive speech of the Police Inspector!

"Madam President," said Jane, her voice low and a bit husky from her effort to keep it from trembling—not with fear but from excitement—"may I say a few words before the vote is taken?"

Mrs. Renzheimer not only granted the permission, but requested Mrs. Watts to come to the platform where she could be seen and heard by all.

By the time Jane had reached the stage she had gotten herself so completely in hand that she was able to face the throng at her feet without the least sign of nervousness.

"Madam President—members of the Civic Club—and—" she deliberately waved her hand to the rear of the crowded auditorium—"Mr. Police Inspector! I am glad you are still with us, for I am sure you will hear things here this afternoon, *when Miss Lawrence makes her speech*, that will do you good!" (Loud applause from half the house.)

"We read that Jesus went 'teaching throughout all Jewry'—and wherever He went, we are told, 'He stirreth up the people.' Note that, Mr. Police Inspector—'He stirreth up the people.' You would have had Him arrested, wouldn't you? No one will deny that Miss Lawrence has followed this example of Christ's and has stirred up the people of Leitersville, but with His example before us, we can hardly denounce as 'Bolshevistic,' [whatever that is] or 'anarchistic,' every one who 'stirreth up the people.'

"I would remind Mr. Police Inspector that Jesus referred to His own liege sovereign, Herod, as 'that fox'; also that Pharaoh thought the social unrest in Egypt was caused by the pernicious agitation of the two walking delegates, Moses and Aaron, who stirred up the Israelite Bricklayers' union to dissatisfaction with the foreign government under which they lived! Our own Ameri-

can poet, James Russell Lowell, said, 'There is enough dynamite in the New Testament, if illegitimately applied, to blow all our existing institutions into atoms.' We don't at all want to 'blow our existing institutions into atoms,' but we do want to remodel some of them quite beyond recognition. We want at least to *try* for the Promised Land and not go on forever serving Pharaoh.

"Now *I* am not going to talk to you of the right or wrong of the teachers' joining the American Federation of Teachers, for that would be trespassing upon the theme of the speaker of the afternoon *whom you will presently hear from this platform—*"

(Loud and prolonged applause from one half of the house, with hisses from the other half.)

"I am going to speak to you for a few minutes of some of the reasons why Miss Augusta Lawrence should be permitted to address us to-day on the subject of the affiliation of teachers with laborers.

"Are industrial conditions in the world to-day so perfect that he who 'stirreth up the people' to examine into these conditions is a mere disturber of the peace? Or is he, on the contrary, a benefactor and savior? Do we not have a chronic condition of poverty, unemployment, strikes, political corruption, and war—and do not these chronic ills call for analysis of a social order that seems to be fundamentally so un-Christian? Can you find a business man who has the temerity to affirm that our economic world is run on Christian principles? Most of them deny that Christianity has anything to do with industry or business. Others sadly admit that to practice Christian ethics in industry would mean ruin. We

have allowed a huge system of exploitation to grow up which has become the moral scandal of this century! A system that destroys decency, honor, brotherhood!

"Miss Lawrence is going to suggest to us this afternoon some means of escape from this system—among which she will perhaps name the getting together of laborers and school-teachers. That would be a good beginning, it seems to me.

"We seem to be afraid of our laborers. But haven't we more, or at least as much, reason to be afraid of our capitalists, our corporations, our politicians?

"I once saw inscribed over the gate of a prison, 'The worst day in the life of a young man is when he gets the idea that he can make a dollar without doing a dollar's worth of work for it.' And I wondered how that inscription would look at the entrance of the New York Stock Exchange or the Chicago Produce Exchange!

"There was a good old time, you know, when the drudges of the world never questioned that poverty and inequality were divinely ordained to be accepted with a meek and lowly spirit. It has been Democracy that has awakened the laborers to a higher ideal. Do you question that the new ideal *is* higher? The historian, Froude, says, 'The endurance of the inequalities of life by the poor is *one of the marvels of human society*.' And Mirabeau must have meant the same thing when he said, 'When the people have complained, the people have always been right.' If only governments could be founded upon the family principle of mutual love and service, rather than upon the policeman's theory! Here in Leitchville, as in all American industrial cities, contrast the

section where the owners live—the Avenue—with the section where the workers live—Sauer Kraut Hill; the one clean and beautiful; the other squalid, dirty, dreary. Peasants from southern Europe who work in our industrial towns lose their song and laughter and dancing, their courtesy, their instinctive love of art and beauty. They become, my dear ladies, *Americanized*!

“Now, I ask you—will you consent to allow Miss Lawrence to talk to you this afternoon on the tendencies, as she sees them, of this great awakening of the masses to a sense of their just human rights—(of which the action of the teachers is a phase)—or will you, by refusing to recognize the claims of any class but your own, by hiding your eyes, ostrich-like, from the facts of the modern world, let yourselves, like the blind autocrats of Russia, be presently overrun and wiped out of existence? I ask you to take heed before it is too late—and hearken to those whose ‘eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord’ in the brotherhood of all men.”

As Jane stepped down from the platform, the applause was so long and loud that Mrs. Renzheimer, instantly rising to reply and to refute and counteract Jane’s evident effect, could not at once speak, though the expression of her face, the set, thin smile of her oversweet mouth, so incongruously at variance with the cold malicious sparkle of her small eyes, said more than enough to reveal to every one before her how intensely chagrined and amazed she was at the apostasy just revealed in the wife of the pastor of The Church On The Avenue.

Augusta, meantime, in the ante-room, was more moved



by Jane's gallant effort to save their side from the defeat which would certainly have followed upon the Police Inspector's chilling appearance and plea, than she had ever before been moved by anything within her memory. It was not so much Jane's loyalty to her; Augusta had no illusions as to that; she knew well that Jane's love and loyalty to her husband would outweigh anything save her respect for the truth. What moved Augusta so deeply and really thrilled her was her knowledge of the rarity of such a disinterested, self-sacrificing act as that of Jane's this afternoon—jeopardizing the position, the very life-work, of her mate whom she greatly loved, by alienating the powerful influences upon which depended their livelihood; putting an unbearable strain upon her relations with her husband and lover by offending and hurting him! It was almost more than human. So few people could even *see* what was against their self-interest, let alone act upon it! Augusta was heartened and inspired to fresh devotion and courage on her own part by Jane's rare faithfulness to the vision that burned in her heart. She seemed to realize, as never before, that no other happiness or gain in life was comparable to that of simple, straightforward, uncompromising adherence to an ideal.

When at last the audience grew quiet, Mrs. Renzheimer made a desperate attempt, before calling for a vote, to swing the sentiment of the audience away from the very palpable bias it had taken from Mrs. Watts' speech. She referred regretfully to the "irreverence for sacred things" which they had been forced to hear this



afternoon from this platform, which was all the more distressing when one considered "the source from which it emanated"; the open ridicule aimed at an officer of the law who had come here to appeal to their better selves, begging their help in preserving Leitersville from the unrest and strife so prevalent in less favored cities; to the slurs at Christianity; the dangerous upholding of the revolutionary spirit of the masses at a time when all right-minded people were trying so hard to get back to "normalcy."

She spoke ramblingly of the danger of "trying to change the government," at the same time that she pronounced our government too corrupt and incapable to be entrusted with the ownership of public utilities. Yet she reiterated that it was treason and sedition to even suggest changing such an untrustworthy, incapable government.

Her adherents in the audience, however, noticed no lack of logic or reasonableness in her talk. It was met by just as much, if not more, applause as Jane's speech had received; so it was impossible to gauge beforehand which way the vote would go.

The taking and counting of the ballot was scrupulously guarded by both sides from fraudulency.

There were one hundred voting members of the Club and Augusta's side received a majority of exactly four votes.

The moment this fact was announced, and in the very midst of the wild applause from Augusta's side, Mrs. Renzheimer rose to resign, not only her presidency, but

her membership in the Club. This was formidable. Financially the Club was very dependent upon the Leiters and their followers.

In the deathly and dramatic stillness which fell upon the audience as they heard the President's cold-sweet statement, she walked off the platform.

The vice-president, who was fortunately on Augusta's side, promptly took her place.

When a moment later Augusta stood before her audience, apparently as serenely undisturbed as though she were not the center of a storm of seething feminine passion, she was greeted not only with hand-clapping and stamping, but with a prolonged cheering—during which a dozen or more people, either from principle or discretion, followed Mrs. Renzheimer's example and left the room. Many of those who remained were clearly against the speaker and were staying only out of curiosity—or because they wanted to be present for what they knew was going to be the tragic ending of the afternoon—of which they had gained some foreknowledge.

## CHAPTER II

**T**HE quiet dignity of Augusta's manner when she spoke, after all the preceding excitement, was sufficiently impressive (quite apart from her beauty, her personality, not to say the style of her clothes) to affect quite forcibly even her opponents.

"I was sorry to see by the morning papers," she began conversationally, "that five of the forty expelled teachers have weakened in the brave stand they had taken, have resigned from the Federation of Teachers and have been reinstated in their positions. Now, do you wish your children taught by those who cannot be bribed and intimidated, who have kept their souls their own—or by those who at the command of the school board have surrendered their most ardent convictions? Remember, it is only those teachers that have ideals and initiative that can inspire it in others. May the teacher of to-day not think independently on any public question? Must he or she be a chattel of politicians, plutocrats, Capitalism, professional 'patriots'? Must he be an unthinking mannikin; without initiative; not only conservative, but behind the times?"

"Capitalism rules in Leitersville and says, 'Teachers may not join the A. F. L.' Reverse the situation. Suppose we had a school board of laborers who decided that *only* teachers who joined Unions should be elected; then

we'd hear cries of 'Open shop!' 'The freedom of the American citizen!' 'Coercion!' 'Prussianism!'

"The school board has said that it cannot allow class partisanship in its teachers. But if the class partisanship had happened to be on the capitalistic side, would they have been expelled? (Laughter) Of course the mere suggestion makes you laugh!

"Mr. Police Inspector has told us this afternoon that he believes the A. F. L. is the most potent factor for the continued disturbance in this country to-day. Well, I should like to take you, Mr. Police Inspector, with about five hundred Garys who oppose Labor Unionism, and put you all to work in a mill or in the West Virginia mines, under the same living and working conditions that usually exist in such places, with no more hope of escape than the average worker has, yet retaining all the energy and ability you now display—and we'd see whether you wouldn't have a very lively and even powerful labor organization going at full blast inside of a month! Deprived of the weapons always at the disposal of the Garys and West Virginia mine owners—(the constabulary, deputy sheriffs, Pinkertons and militia)—these newly enslaved Garys would no doubt use their own physical force to such a degree that our American Federation of Labor would have to warn and advise them to 'go slow' and use more peaceful methods.

"I would have you note that the laborers of the world have been much more slow to resort to violence than English women have been in their fight for suffrage.

"We are told of the tyranny of Unions, their graft, the disorder, upheaval and distress they cause. We admit it

all. But when you've said the worst that can be said of them, have they ever inflicted on the world one-hundredth of the wrong and suffering which the laboring class has been made to endure? Ever been as corrupt as the political leaders that have exploited the public? Those who know the workings of organized labor, know that their principles and ideals are, compared to commercial and political combines, high and clean and pure!

"Underlying all this strife between Labor and Capital is a *fundamental maladjustment*. Now that maladjustment cannot be mended by tinkering with the existing economic order, but only by reconstructing it from the ground up. If you want to get rid of Labor Unions, anarchists, I. W. W's, *mend that maladjustment!* That's what our teachers would help to do in their affiliation with the laborers. Will you persecute them for it? Deny them a living? Or will you, with all your mind and strength and heart, aid and abet them? Will you—"

Augusta was not allowed to finish her speech. At this moment the Police Inspector again made his appearance upon the platform and in stentorian tones announced to the startled audience that he arrested the speaker on the ground of "criminal syndicalism."

As Augusta, before the stunned silence of that large, motionless audience, was led off the stage and out of the building to a waiting taxicab, she found herself, somewhat to her own surprise, so perfectly calm and collected before this unprecedented adventure, her predominant feeling being an intense interest and curiosity as to what was going to befall her in this novel situation, that she experienced a sort of impersonal amusement over her

self. If only the novelty stopped short of tragedy! To be locked in a "cell"! How was she going to feel when a great iron door clanged to upon her solitude?

But surely Charles had anticipated this and would be on hand to bail her out. Would she let him? The cells might be infected with vermin! She had heard they often were. What a creature "J. L." was, to resort to violence like this!

Society was really in a state of civil warfare; millionaires homes studded with police alarms; their gates held by armed guards; mail trains protected by big guns from desperate, hungry men out of employment; banks guarded like armed forts. Had we progressed really beyond the violence of feudal times?

Arrived at the police station, she looked about for Charles. But he was not there.

Some one else, however, whom she was not in the least expecting, was there, having arrived just a few minutes before her and the Inspector.



### CHAPTER III

TWO questions burned in Jane's heart when, with difficulty extricating herself from one after another of the excited groups in the aisle of the auditorium and on the steps and pavement of the Club house, that would have detained her after the Club meeting, she walked down the Avenue towards the Manse. First, would Robert let her bail Augusta out of jail? Second, would Jacob Leiter, when he learned from his daughter, Mrs. Renzheimer, of the part the pastor's wife had taken at the meeting to-day, have her also arrested, or be content, in her case, merely to have the Elders of The Church On The Avenue request the pastor's resignation?

It was two hours since Mrs. Renzheimer had left the meeting; she had had ample time already to have informed her father of what had occurred.

Jane's distress for Augusta was almost greater than her sorrow at having irreparably damaged her husband's worldly career; for of course it *was* only his worldly career, and not at all his "opportunity for usefulness," (as he would certainly proclaim) which she had hurt.

"For so long as he does as all ministers seem to do these days—slip out from under every real issue they meet, instead of grappling with it as Mr. Calloway does, of what use is the ministry?—except to afford a solacing opiate to a few old women! It's not a man's job and Robert would *better* lose it!"

As she came in sight of her home, she saw with a shock and a further sinking of her heart, Mr. Jacob Leiter and his daughter, Mrs. Renzheimer, just emerging from the front door of the Manse. Mrs. Renzheimer had lost no time, it seemed, in reporting the "disloyalty" of the pastor's wife to her father; and her father had been equally prompt in delivering to the pastor his opinion of such an unprecedented spirit as emanating from the Manse.

So, then, Robert already knew the worst!

Jane's step lagged over the next few pavements; but she made a great effort as she entered the Manse, to pluck up her spirits for the coming interview with her husband. Far from feeling defiant or on the defensive, she was sincerely grieved at having been forced into injuring Robert.

She found him in his study at his desk, his face white and worried. As she sank limply into a chair before him, throwing her hat on a near-by couch and drawing off her gloves, Robert did not speak to her, but his cold, disapproving gaze was a more eloquent accusation than any words could have been. He left it to her to explain her conduct if she could.

"I saw Mr. Leiter and Mrs. Renzheimer leave here just now," she began, her voice sad and tired. "I'm sorry it had to be, Robert!"

"Why did it have to be?" he asked in a tone of such heavy despair that her heart sank like lead in her breast.

"I did as I had to do. I'm not sorry I did. I am awfully sorry for its effect on you."

"Why on earth did you marry a minister of the church

if you knew you 'had' to do things that would injure him?"

"I see now I shouldn't have!" faltered Jane, big tears falling from her eyes. "Augusta warned me how it would be if I married into the Church! But I could not believe that mere differences of opinion could weigh against such love as ours!"

"Augusta!" Robert burst out irrepressibly. "It is she that is ruining you and me! Our love, our home, my work, my career—"

"Mr. Leiter has told you then that we must leave here?"

"Unless I can curb your madness!"

"You promised him you'd undertake to do that?" inquired Jane with such impersonal curiosity that Robert, in spite of his genuine suffering, almost smiled.

"They tell me," he said despairingly, "that in your speech this afternoon you were irreverent, blasphemous!—that you quoted the Scriptures flippantly—that you made my profession look ridiculous!"

"Do you believe I did, Robert?"

"Whether you did or not, that's the impression you gave!"

"I made a corking good speech and I wish you'd heard it!" Jane maintained. "You'd have had a right to be proud!"

"You've done me a very great injury! Just because you care more for your friend Augusta than for the highest interests of your husband!"

"Oh, Robert, I'd sacrifice a dozen Augustas for your little finger! But I won't sacrifice my self-respect—I

won't be a cad! This job of yours isn't worth such sacrifice!"

"I see," said Robert bitterly, "that I may as well resign at once!"

"From the ministry?" cried Jane with a jump of eagerness that jarred the ink-well on the desk.

"Give up my life work for your fanatical whims? Well, hardly! But you certainly will, if you keep on as you're doing, force me to resign this pastorate and seek another! And I don't want to do that! It would terribly injure my standing to *have* to leave here! Understand, Jane, the Christian ministry is my sacred life work!"

"Then, Robert dear, make it a life work worth doing!" pleaded Jane.

"*You* are making that impossible! A fine prospect for all our married life ahead of us if we're constantly going to differ and bicker like this!"

Jane gazed at him in consternation. "And ministers can't get divorced!" she breathed. "What shall we *do*?"

"What shall we do? Why won't you *behave* yourself?"

"Oh, Robert, neither you nor I can afford to let marriage be a bondage to us. We've got to think and act independently of each other. I won't interfere with you. But you must let me, too, live as I think right. If you think it your Christian duty to uphold Mr. Leiter, then that's what you must do. But I can't."

"In an imperfect world, a man, to get anywhere, to avoid ruin, has got to act expediently; to compromise."

"As your Master went about compromising? Do you

mean it's got to be a choice between expediency and Christianity?"

"A compromise, certainly. That's only common sense. And you're wrong in supposing that you and I can act independently of each other. We're mates, partners. We've got to pull together!"

Jane sighed. "I see that a minister's wife, more than the wife of a business man or of a man of another profession, must share her husband's work. But Robert, could you live with a hypocrite and a coward?"

"I'm not finding it easy to live with a woman who mocks at my religion."

"I'd never mock at any one's religion. I might mock at their lack of religion. It's the lack of religion that we were fighting at the Civic Club to-day. Can't you see, Robert, that the world is now in the birth throes of a higher ideal of human relationships?—and if the Church dares to ignore this upward struggle, she'll lose all claim to moral leadership!"

"You would depend upon *man's* power to bring in the millennium, when it is only through faith in God that salvation is wrought!"

"What is it to have faith in God? Isn't it an act of supreme faith in God to risk standing for what is right, regardless of consequences?"

"An act of supreme imprudence and self-righteousness, Jane! No common sense *in* it!"

"To have common sense means to run with the crowd, *doesn't* it?"

"To succeed in working with men one must conform," Robert maintained.

"Jesus didn't conform, yet He worked rather successfully with men. Of course they crucified Him for His lack of common sense in not conforming! Isn't it always a choice between worldly success and Calvary?"

"The choice for me here in Leitersville is whether I shall work for the regeneration of society through my only available medium, the Church, not by attacking it, but by infusing the blessed spirit of Christ into this community—or whether I shall so antagonize the powers that keep me here that I shall lose my great opportunity for radiating and diffusing, through the Church, the light of Christianity."

"We are to restrict ourselves to radiating sweetness and light while we carefully refrain from referring to industrial atrocities, to Mr. Leiter's business methods, the West Virginia mines, a hypocritical war, the millions in these United States who are in constant fear of hunger, who toil for others against their will and are never free for one day of their lives to do the work they love best, class fighting class in bitter hatred that even extends to murdering each other!"

"You go to such extremes! Just as Calloway does! He is simply destroying his chances for usefulness by insisting upon flaunting opinions that the majority abominate!"

"It's not Mr. Calloway's opinions that matter, but his readiness to die for those opinions, Robert! It's not a man's 'common sense,' but his spiritual integrity that counts."

"And you think I haven't any spiritual integrity?"

"Shall I answer you truly?"



"I asked you."

"I think the Church to-day does not permit its ministers that luxury. If a man of spiritual integrity does happen to be found in the Church, he is soon forced out of it. Or else he's induced to exchange his spiritual integrity for the more valuable assets of common sense, expediency, compromise. The spiritual integrity of the Church has been bought by Capital for thirty pieces of silver!"

"That is not true! The Church is the greatest, the only, restraining influence in the world against evil!"

"It does not restrain or even fight evil, my dear! It's so tainted by the poisoned public opinion which has been generated by Capitalism for years and years that it's sick!—utterly inactive before the present needs of the world!"

"But think of the many souls, Jane, that have found inspiration through the Church to live nobly and courageously!"

"Isn't the spirit of Christ found in far finer form in heretics, free thinkers, non-Christian enterprises, than in the Church?"

"I suppose you think it is found exclusively among the laboring people!—whose principle of life is, 'Give as little, get as much as you can!' "

"And did you ever notice, dear, that that seems to be the capitalist's principle too? That's why we've got to challenge the Church to help to reorganize society on a Christian basis. Don't you believe, Robert, in the supremacy of the common good, rather than that of a few privileged ones?"

"What I think is that it is suicidal to fly in the face of what most men believe!"

"I suppose there's no use in my asking you to bail Augusta out of the Leitersville jail?"

"None. I consider jail a very excellent place for Augusta to be."

Jane's reply was checked by the ringing of the front door bell, followed in a moment by a knock on the study door and the entrance of Augusta herself, accompanied by her rescuer. Jane's heart seemed to leap into her throat as the sudden presence of Mr. Calloway in the room filled it with radiance.

## CHAPTER IV

**A**S Augusta was not given to ardent demonstrations of her feelings, her walking straight up to Jane just now, taking her into her arms and holding her, without speaking, her eyes glistening with tears which she would not allow to fall, made Jane's more impulsive and dramatic soul respond with a burst of weeping on her friend's bosom, partly in a reaction from the strain of her talk with Robert, partly in her great relief at finding Augusta at large.

"Hold, hold, Jane, water ruins georgette, don't you know it?" protested Augusta to cover her embarrassment, while the two ministers with considerable reserve, shook hands, Mr. Calloway's intellectual, sensitive face being in extreme contrast to Robert's suave, smooth countenance.

"Mr. Watts," Augusta turned to Robert as she took the chair he placed for her before his desk, while Jane and Mr. Calloway sat on the couch that stood at right angles to the desk, "you couldn't have helped being proud of Jane if you'd been at the Club this afternoon!"

"So she tells me!" said Robert, his habitual ministerial tone of urbanity slightly tinged with irony. "Perhaps for my Christian humility it's well I did not hear her!"

"If Mrs. Watts had not spoken when she did," said Mr. Calloway in his incisive way, "they'd never have

voted to let Miss Lawrence speak! We've won a victory and we've Mrs. Watts to thank for it!"

"What victory have you won?" asked Robert unenthusiastically.

"The victory for free speech, of course. At last a public plea for the teachers has been made!"

"I'm afraid you'll all find you'll have to pay a heavy price for your little momentary victory!"

"Naturally we're not counting the cost in a campaign like this!" returned Mr. Calloway cheerfully.

"But the moral loss involved," suggested Robert a characteristic note of caution in his voice. "The stirring up of strife and dissension and hatred and resentment—"

"Some sorts of peace involve a moral loss that a few of us consider quite too costly."

"Whatever the questionable gain, it seems to me scarcely worth the endangering of my very position here, robbing me of my great opportunity for usefulness in Leitersville,—and for you, Miss Lawrence, the vulgarity of a law-suit."

"All the women who stood on our side will pay a price!" admitted Augusta, "for Mrs. Renzheimer, I'm sure, has a complete list of them, and every one of them is the wife or sister or daughter of some employee or debtor to Mr. Jacob Leiter—just as you are in a sense, Mr. Watts," she added sympathetically.

Robert winced. "Harmony and security, law and order, are infinitely more valuable as moral and spiritual assets than anything you gain through strife and dissension," he insisted.

"You would maintain law and order," said Calloway, "but on the side of those who possess, not on the side of the dispossessed. The dispossessed can get their just share in life only by disturbing the prevailing order. You cry for *your* law and order!—not for that of the working-man. The time has surely come, Mr. Watts, when we of the Church have got to choose whether we'll denounce and repudiate the world as it is to-day, and work with all our strength to change it, or whether we'll conform and accept it and thereby give up our sacred mission."

"Our sacred mission is spiritual, not secular; to spiritualize and save the individual and through him the community; not to attack and upset the social or political policy of the community. With that, specifically, the Church has nothing to do."

"The Christian Church will stand aside while the Bourbon spirit in our Capitalistic system plunges us ever deeper into anarchy and ruin?" demanded Calloway, his swift directness, like a cold wind, penetrating Robert's cloak of self-esteem.

"We can't make people good by legislation, Mr. Calloway."

"But we can give them a fairer chance to be good. I once asked your Elder, Mr. Leiter, 'Don't you think there's some moral question involved in the propinquity of huge dividends and low wages?' His answer was unhesitating:—'There's no question of right or wrong there. Case of supply and demand. The man who pays more for labor than the lowest sum he can get men and women

for, is robbing his stock holders and the company.' You can't deny, Mr. Watts, that that's sound business principle."

"Ah, but the modern world is challenging such business ethics as that, Mr. Calloway, and they must and will be replaced by a more generous attitude on the part of the employers."

"It is radicals rather than so-called Christians that are challenging such business ethics, and it isn't generous employers we want, but a just and democratic industrial system. The modern makeshifts—philanthropies, boards of arbitration, legislation for improved labor conditions,—are no longer an answer to labor's protest; labor now demands, not an adjustment of class privileges, but an abolition of them!"

"I don't consider it the pulpit's function to discuss such questions," protested Robert.

"It's the pulpit's function to teach the truth—not to compromise with the truth!"

"To teach, yes. But I draw the line at using it for propaganda!" said Robert gravely.

"Aren't you backing away from definite moral issues in the case of the Open Letter of the Employers' Association and the expulsion of the teachers and other wrongs here, refusing to let your light shine on these vital questions?"

"May I say you cannot judge for me, my dear sir?" said Robert coldly.

"Will you come to the Ministerium next week, Mr. Watts, to discuss my *Resolutions* repudiating the employers' Open Letter?"



"I am sorry to say I shall be unable to attend the Ministerium meeting next week, Mr. Calloway."

"You think it would not be judicious for you to be present?"

"Mr. Calloway, we've always had peace and harmony in The Church On The Avenue and I propose to maintain it!"

"The peace of death is what you've had! Is that what you're going to maintain?"

Quite unexpectedly, Robert, unable longer to endure this grilling, suddenly rose and turned upon Augusta. "Miss Lawrence, I am afraid I must be painfully frank with you," he said in a tone of intense gravity, almost solemnity; "I object to your influence on my wife. I think it unChristian—you are an unbeliever. I think it unsocial—you disturb the peace of this community and of homes. I think it wrong-headed and wild—I think it unwomanly, unlovely! Your influence is coming between Jane and me, destroying the serenity of our home, the harmonious relation in which we lived before you came—"

Robert's emotion, whether of grief or compassion, quite choked him and he could not go on.

Mr. Calloway and Augusta rose at once. Jane's eyes, startled, heavy with sadness, seemed to plead with her friend not to forsake her, as Augusta silently kissed her good-by.

"Oh, Jane! Must this be the end of things between you and me?"

"You know me better than that, Augusta," said Jane quietly, though her face was burning.

When they had left, Jane would have gone at once to her room, but Robert stopped her.

"Now I suppose, my dear, you've a grievance against me because I've quite intentionally (I admit it) made it rather impossible for your friend to come here. But you must understand I'm acting in self-defense. I detest her influence upon you and I'm making a fight for our love, our home, our life together, Jane!"

"I value those things as much as you do, Robert. But if you are not ready to abandon your convictions for them, why should I be?"

"Because you lose nothing by giving up and I lose everything."

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world," began Jane—but Robert cut her short by coming up to her and taking her in his arms. "Jane, dear, let us have peace! I ask nothing unreasonable of you—only that you use your common sense and keep to a safe middle course, as I'm trying to do in these useless controversies! Do, do promise me that you will, my darling!"

"How could I promise, Robert, to keep to a safe middle course between Jake Leiter and Jesus Christ?"

"Please, Jane, don't be so irreverent! I don't ask you to stand on Leiter's side. I'm not on his side myself in everything, by any means—"

"God forbid!"

"I only ask you to be neutral, to keep *out* of it. Haven't I a right to ask that much of you?"

"You have a right to expect me never to be false to myself."

Robert dropped his arms and turned away. "Pretty phrases that simply reiterate your determination to do as you please, regardless of prudence, of my position, my feelings, my influence, my wishes! This means that you are my enemy, not my wife, my helpmate!"

"Suppose you try to be *my* helpmate in the things that matter, dear!"

"But it is I, not you, that must earn our living."

"Don't you see that it is impossible to make the Church your means of a livelihood if you are going to be true to it?"

"For me it's not impossible," answered Robert.

Jane turned sorrowfully away and went up-stairs to her room.

## CHAPTER V

**A**S early as possible next morning Jane went to see Augusta at her apartment.

"If Robert has made it impossible for you to come to the Manse, he can't of course, prevent my coming to you."

"It's well I'm leaving in a few days; your loyalty to me, dear, would prove, as Robert pointed out, quite too costly!"

"But for my immortal soul—if 'tis immortal—the costly thing would be *disloyalty* to you. You can't leave, can you, before your trial for 'criminal syndicalism,' whatever that is? Or Mr. Calloway would have to pay your bail! To think of *you*, Augusta—whom I've always thought so stately and superior!—mixed up with jail and bail and patrols and crime! Have I a perverted sense of humor in thinking it *funny*?"

"You're clearly a degenerate! But Charles Leiter has settled it with his father that I shall not have to stand trial."

Jane, enormously relieved to hear this, expressed her delighted satisfaction—and added, "Charles dropped in at the Manse just after you and Mr. Calloway left yesterday—he was looking for you and he seemed dreadfully annoyed that Mr. Calloway had bailed you out. He would rather you had spent a night in jail than that any one but himself should have come to your rescue."

"He came to see me last night and explained why he had not been on the spot—he knew he could help me more effectually by not antagonizing his father so openly as to go my bail. He got his father to have the charges against me withdrawn on condition that I leave Leitersville at once and don't return!"

"Upon my word!" remarked Jane.

"Mr. Leiter went to New York to-day to—to bring his wife from New York and—"

"And his step-daughter, too," put in Jane, "if he can find her; so he told Robert. I'm sorry you'll miss meeting J. L.'s wife, Gussie! She's such a funny brute! When do you have to go?" asked Jane mournfully.

"Mr. Leiter returns with—his family—to-morrow night and I am to be gone when he gets back or take what I get!"

"Then you leave to-morrow?"

"No—I'm going to wait over a few days."

"What for? You'll get into more trouble."

"Oh, no I won't," smiled Augusta enigmatically.

"Charles' pull with his father isn't limitless!" Jane warned her. "And when the old man begins to realize Charles's relation with you—"

"Charles has no relation whatever with me, Jane, as I've assured you before."

"Have you really refused such an 'eligible offer?'" sighed Jane regretfully.

"I shall never have the chance to refuse *that* 'eligible offer!'"

"But," said Jane impatiently, "when any one can see that the man's mad about you, why do you pretend?"

"He'll wonderfully recover his sanity, my dear—and very soon!"

Jane considered her friend in perplexity. "You're awfully strange about Charles, Augusta, and always have been! Do you know," she added, leaning forward, her chin propped on her fingers, "Charles' errand at the Manse yesterday was a very peculiar one! He wanted to know whether I had a photograph of our class at Wellesley, and when I produced it, he asked, '*Now which one is Barbara Harrell?*' Ah!" she exclaimed, pointing an accusing finger at Augusta, "no wonder you blush, you Sapphira! *Why* did you tell him such a whopper as that his step-sister was in our class? There was certainly no Barbara Harrell at college during our time there!"

"I didn't actually tell him there was. If he got that impression from what I said,—well, his conceited idea that his step-mother is crazy to marry her daughter to him *irritated* me!—goaded me to tell him he'd do well to keep on running from *that* girl! What did he say when you told him there was no such person in our class?"

"He looked very odd—awfully puzzled! Did he speak of it to you last night when he saw you?"

"He never referred to it. I wonder why he didn't!" Augusta speculated.

"I should think Charles would hate the splashy announcement in the *Gazette* to-day of his step-mother's expected return! Did you see it?"

"Yes," answered Augusta shortly. "I never miss the *Gazette's* social page," she went on hurriedly, with an



obvious effort to change the subject. "‘Social Whirl of Leitersville,’" she quoted. "‘Young Men’s Bible Class Has Oyster Supper,’ ‘Mr. Jacob Leiter Host to Sunday School Class,’ ‘The Ladies’ Aid Society of Shoop’s Reformed Church Had a Baked Bean Supper,’ ‘Men’s Club of the Methodist Church Dines To-morrow,’—all mixed in with the orgies of the *débutantes*, their dinners, theater parties, luncheons, dances. You ought to hear what Mr. Calloway says about these *débutante* affairs!" Augusta talked on almost feverishly, while Jane regarded her wonderingly, for her friend was not given to chattering.

"Surely," she protested, "Mr. Calloway is not one of those ministers who wastes himself denouncing youthful gayety?"

"Of course he’s not a narrow Puritan! But he points out that while thousands of dollars are spent at just one of these *débutante* parties, for flowers, food, orchestra, clothes, young girls of the working class are doomed to drudgery and want and denied even the education they ought to have. He was telling me yesterday of a girl of sixteen who is supporting a tubercular sister and two small brothers, on ten dollars a week (she works in Leiter’s stocking factory). He told me of another seventeen year old girl who is extremely bright, who had to leave the High School in her senior year to go to work and help support her family when her father was forced to join the millions of unemployed. Every day he is dealing with cases like that. The young school teachers here who give valuable service to the community haven’t enough to live on during their summer vacation—while

these parasitical women and girls of society who contribute no service, squander and waste."

"And it's the parasites," said Jane, "who get up the 'drives' for charity!"

"That's the worst phase of the whole system!" declared Augusta. "Because it's only the scum of humanity that wouldn't rather starve than beg! Yet when Mr. Calloway stands in his pulpit and points out how we might wipe out conditions demanding 'charity'—by Christianizing society—his rich members leave his church, saying he's an enemy of law and order!"

"Yes, that's what all the wealthy people of Leitersville call him! Mrs. Jacob Leiter, for instance, hates Mr. Calloway as much as Mrs. Renzheimer hates you!"

"Do you see much of her when she's home—of Mrs. Jacob Leiter?"

"Oh, yes, she's very active in our church. When she applied for membership and the Elders summoned her before them to put her through the usual formal catechism, one of the questions was, 'What is your purpose in wishing to join this church?'—and her delightfully frank answer was, 'To get into society.' That's how she forced society to receive her—by working in The Church On The Avenue. Her lurid, ribald talk,—her mixture of piety with slang—oh, my dear!"

"Can you imagine," said Augusta with a far-away thoughtfulness in her eyes, "a man of Mr. Calloway's fastidiousness in any sort of contact with this Mrs. Leiter?"

"More easily than I can imagine Charles Leiter in

contact with her—because Charles is not so broad in his sympathy and understanding.”

Augusta's face lit up. “You are right! Mr. Calloway's fineness is not the sort that excludes any one.

“‘He drew a circle that shut me out,  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win,  
We drew a circle that took him in.’”

“The more aristocratic my soul, the more easily will it find the points of vital contact with every other soul, even the crudest and humblest—or wickedest!—that sounds like Walt Whitman and *I* made it out!” said Jane. “Augusta, are you in love with Mr. Calloway?”

“Who wouldn't be? Do you see such a man, not to say such a Christian minister, every day?”

“My own heart is devastated with love for him!” said Jane pensively.

“Next thing you'll be having Robert hurling anathemas at him as he did at me—home-breaker, disturber of the peace, blasphemer! What didn't he call me!”

“I'm not much more popular with Robert just now than you are, dear!” said Jane gloomily. “I could write a good movie on, *Why Ministers' Wives Leave Home.*”

As Jane presently walked back to the Manse, she fell to wondering whether Augusta's object in dangerously remaining for a few days longer in Leitersville, was to have a little more time with Mr. Calloway? It was strange that she should so unnecessarily risk another bout with Jacob Leiter.

## CHAPTER VI

JANE found herself, during the church service the next Sunday morning, yielding to the temptation (which thus far in her married life she had more or less successfully resisted) of a critical mental attitude towards Robert's sermons and prayers, though deep down in her heart she suffered at being *able* to be so disloyal.

"We thank Thee for our beneficent Christian civilization and for the wise and compelling laws of our great Republic," prayed Robert. "We pray for the old-fashioned type of experimental piety."

("What the dickens *was* that antique?" Jane wondered while her head was bowed in prayer; she had a rebellious inclination *not* to bow it.)

"That Thou dost not control us completely is not because Thou dost not will so to do."

("Does Robert actually believe that the Unknowable Creator of the boundless universe is *listening* to this? Accusing It of having Its will thwarted by Man!")

The queer thing about it was that Robert's sentences sounded as though they really did mean something, he delivered them so impressively.

"To-day the blue sky smiling down upon us, the bright sunshine and clear, pure air enveloping us, are evidence of Thy deep interest in us!"

("God's 'interest in us!'—gee!")

"Bless our President, our Governor, and any others in any governmental function."

("'Governmental function!'—how Leitersville loves it!")

"May the strangers in our midst this morning find us God's people."

("Some find!")—Jane suddenly had to make a desperate effort to restrain an inclination to hysterical laughter. "I'm indecent sitting here making fun of my own husband!"

To hear at the end, "These things we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord," seemed to her blasphemous, so genuine was her reverence for the sacred name of the beloved Martyr for mankind.

It was depressing to realize that the secret of the great popularity of Robert's sermons was their uncompromising commonplaceness; he had a positive genius for safe mediocrity; evidently the greatest asset a Christian minister of the day could have; for was not the congregation of The Church On The Avenue an absolutely typical congregation? Here were all the reputable people of the community, the kind, benevolent, generous people; the strictly moral and upright and law-abiding people. But were there, here, any well-informed and thinking people? Inasmuch as civilization made of the Christian Church services a mockery and absurdity, Jane concluded that people who saw no incongruity in them were simply unintelligent; or, if, seeing the incongruity, they continued serenely to countenance it, how could one avoid the unpleasant deduction that they were hypocritical?

"Two classes," thought Jane, "are antagonistic to the Church—laboring people and thoughtful people. And two classes support it—capitalists and an uninformed, unthinking middle class.

"A preacher's *got* to be intellectually childish to be popular," she decided as she watched the rapt, admiring faces lifted to Robert while he told them, "There can never be a brotherhood of man in a social, economical or intellectual sense—but only in a spiritual sense." Also, "It is just possible that man is the most powerful of all created beings. Of course the angels are more powerful than man, but they have had a long time in which to get to be so powerful, and man is only just beginning."

And his remarks on Sin:—"Sin has spoiled God's pleasure in His work. Sin is the transgression of God's law—a splendid definition, that, of Sin! All that's black and horrible in the world has been caused by Sin!

"What's the remedy? Good works? But good works are tainted by Sin. The building up of character? But character is tainted by Sin. Only the redemption of His vicarious sacrifice can wash away Sin!"

"How can we know that we are Christians?"

("How *will* he answer that?" Jane recalled her wandering attention.)

"When you are really a Christian you will find you have more confidence in Christ as your Saviour. Let us not be satisfied as Christians to play with spelling-blocks, but let us go on and on in the Christian life to the wide sweep of God's wonderful sphere of revelation!"

("A juggler's skill in slinging meaningless jargon!")



thought Jane, "which in Robert's pleasing voice sounds somehow like elegant diction.")

"It's not enough to merely avoid Sin," continued the preacher. "That's being only a negative Christian. For instance, don't ask yourself, 'How many times can I absent myself from church or omit my daily Bible reading, and yet be on good terms with my Saviour?' But ask yourself, 'How many hours can I *spend* on these deep things? How many hours burn the midnight oil in thinking of and communing with my Redeemer?'"

("I never woke up at midnight and caught *you* at it," Jane mentally said to him.)

"From glory unto glory—that is the purpose and end of a Christian! Why, even the weighty problems of the nations in this year 1921, may be solved if we will hold up high standards of noble attainment—splendid, glorious, thrilling, Christ-like living!"

"Must I," thought Jane with an inward groan, "listen to this kind of thing every Sunday for the rest of my mortal life? Rather, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace!"

In the ministry, she saw (as she thought of her husband's steadily rising popularity and success and Mr. Calloway's unpopularity and approaching disaster), that a smooth, graceful manner, a pleasing personality, counted for more than intelligence, earnestness, goodness. Indeed, genuinely high qualities seemed to be a drawback here!

"Why," she thought in consternation, "it has come to be an impossible profession for a self-respecting man!" If that were true, how about the equally impossible profession of being the minister's self-respecting wife?

Almost as trying as the sermons, the music of the choir had always been to her, though *The Church On The Avenue* boasted a high priced quartette of trained singers, a twelve thousand dollar organ and an imported organist. It was the great organ, presented to the church by an ammunition maker whom the war had made a millionaire (presented as a salve to his conscience possibly?) that made Jane hear always in its great tones one awful refrain of carnage—

“God of us who kill our kind!  
 God, we cry to Thee in prayer!  
 Where our stifled anguish bleeds,  
 Strangling through Thine organ reeds,  
 Where our voiceless songs suspire  
 From the corpses in Thy choir—”<sup>1</sup>

While the choir would sing,

“Oh, Love that casts out fear,  
 Oh, Love that casts out sin!”

Jane would hear instead,

“Slaughter! Slaughter! Slaughter!  
 The cold machine whirred on.  
 And strange things crawled among the wheat  
 With entrails dragging at their feet—”<sup>2</sup>

The bass soloist was a man who had been decorated for killing nine Germans in one engagement and one Sunday morning when he sang:

<sup>1</sup> Percy Mackaye.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Noyes.

"Oh, grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell but Thy pure love alone!  
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure and my crown!"

—Jane seemed to hear in place of this prayer to Love, the words of Walt Whitman—

"Hence from my shuddering sight, to nevermore return, that show of blackened, mutilated corpses!

That hell unpent, and raid of blood—fit for wild tigers or for lop-tongued wolves—not reasoning men!"

Thus every Sunday did the organ speak to her. She often wondered did it say these things to any one else within the sound of its ironic melody? Probably not, inasmuch as the choir had presented the ammunition maker with a loving cup in recognition of his generosity.

She had pled with Robert almost passionately to take a stand and refuse to accept the gift of the organ, coming from such a source. But he had not seen the matter at all as she saw it.

"Ammunition makers were helping the world to fight for freedom and justice," he had pointed out.

"The freedom and justice of the Treaty of Versailles?" Jane had asked.

But Robert admired the Treaty of Versailles.

"And any way," he had elucidated his reason for supporting the war, "I read a book once, written by a German, which tried to prove that our Lord Jesus Christ was merely a very good man with nothing supernatural about Him! That's the sort of brutality that came from Germany!"

So the organ presented by the ammunition maker had been installed without protest from any one. And in a sermon which Robert had preached about that time, he said that it had been the love of Jesus in the hearts of the three million English "boys," not to mention the French and others, that had made them give their lives in the Great War. In the face of all the sordid evidence that had come to light, he still persisted in idealizing the Great War. What else could the Church do in view of its whole-hearted support of the bloody orgy?

"And the millions of German and Austrian and Hungarian 'boys' who gave their lives?" Jane had asked him, "it wasn't 'the love of Jesus' in *their* hearts, of course—"

The devotions of the congregation on this special Sunday morning were somewhat distracted by the appearance, in the Leiter family pew, of Mrs. Jacob Leiter, arrayed in a marvelous chiffon creation presumably fresh from Paris, a diamond pendant gleaming on her protruding bosom, large jewels in her ears, a bird of Paradise adornment quivering on her hat. What always seemed to strike one in the eye, at first sight of Mrs. Leiter, was the expensiveness of her attire rather than its elegance. She was a big, handsome woman, forty-three years of age, but looking about thirty-five; her eyes were bleared, her mouth sensual, but her skin was still smooth and beautiful and her hair glossy and abundant. There was undoubtedly an irresistible magnetism about her to which women as well as men were apt to be susceptible. She had, for Jane, who had never before in her life come

into the remotest contact with a woman who had once been openly a courtesan, the most weird fascination; an object of wonder, mystery, speculation. As she watched her to-day from across the aisle, she fell to thinking how Augusta would shrink from a woman like this, how little toleration she would have for her, and how Mrs. Leiter, on her side, would be at a loss before a high, white flame like Augusta.

"It would be interesting to see those two face to face! If Charles and Augusta *should* marry, it certainly won't bring him any closer to his step-mother! Augusta would flee from her even more than Charles does!"

Augusta was, no doubt, sitting this morning at the feet of Mr. Calloway and Jane envied her her freedom to be there, where she would hear, instead of empty phrases, an honest thinker's uncompromising report of human life as he saw it; would be led to feel, with him, a great faith in the fundamental goodness of the universe and of humanity; a faith that men can, and some blessed day will, "live together as brethren."

In the background of her mind a deep pity for Robert troubled her, that he should be irrevocably tied for his whole life to a wife who felt about his very best efforts in his beloved life-work as she felt; to one who would find no gratification, but only humiliation, in the perfectly sincere enthusiasm with which people would speak to her after church of "that perfectly *wonderful* sermon!"

"Robert should be married to a woman who *admires* his sermons and prayers the way this congregation ad-

mires them! Our marriage is for him a tragedy!"

What it was for her, she dared not, at this stage, let herself consider.

Mrs. Jacob Leiter, as the large congregation moved slowly down the crowded aisles, met and greeted her many friends and acquaintances effusively.

It was noticeable that whenever this lurid lady was in church, her step-daughter, Mrs. Renzheimer, did not stop after the services for what the pastor called "a bit of social intercourse, one with another," but always hurried away to escape, evidently, her embarrassment and shame before the conspicuous exuberance of her father's wife.

Mrs. Leiter's greeting of her pastor's wife was hearty to the verge of boisterousness. "Oh, here's dear little Mrs. Watts! And how is Mrs. Watts? *Looking* as if Reverend treated her good anyhow! You certainly drew a prize when you picked your husband, my dear! Isn't he a peach! I'll say! He certainly does put common men like Jake Leiter on the blink! I did hope," she added confidentially, "to keep Jake Leiter in Paris long enough to put a little *polish* on him—like his son Charlie's got—I'm sure *you* appreciate Charlie's elegant breeding, you're such a perfect lady yourself! I often tell Jake to *try* anyhow to put on some of Charlie's side, even if it don't come very natural to him. And I tell you I was just *hot* when he wouldn't stay in Paris long enough to *learn* something! No sooner did we get there than he began fussin' and worryin' so, about Leitersville goin' to the devil while he was away, that *I* wasn't sorry when he lit out for home without me!—though to be



sure, I did my best to keep him; I told him I thought it sure was a pity if old Leitersville couldn't keep in the straight and narrah road for three months without *him* on the job! I asked him, 'Why don't you hand the bucks to Gawd for once? Let *Him* look after your precious Leitersville a couple weeks!' But no, Jake hadn't any faith in Gawd's bein' able to handle Leitersville without his help, so home he came! Well, how have *you* been?" She bent and whispered in Jane's ear. "No sign of a baby yet?"

Jane shook her head.

"Smart you are, not to let yourself get caught!" the lady nodded with a wink that was almost ribald.

"But I'm crazy for a baby!"

"Are you really, now, dearie? Well, now that's awful sweet and womanly of you!" she said, her tone dulcet with sentimentality. "Sure, there's no more sakerd word in the world than *Mother!* I'm a mother myself, you know."

"Did your daughter come home with you?" asked Jane.

"No, but I certainly hope to have her here in a few days, while my son, Charlie-boy, is at home—he's so crazy to see my little girl! Because, you see, he's heard how pretty and attractive she is. He certainly will admar her! She's all to the mustard, my dear. And her manners! Dignified as a queen! And intelleck-shal? Why, Barbie can talk Greek like rollin' down hill!"

"Whom does she talk Greek to?" smiled Jane.

"She could talk it to Charlie if she wanted to. You know how smart *he* is. *He's* the only person, except per-

haps you, Mrs. Watts, that appreciates those Damosch concerts Jake Leiter brings to Leitersville. Most people *here* would sooner have jazz! I know *I* would. To be sure," she magnanimously conceded, "I guess those orchestra concerts *are* better than they sound!—they *cost* enough, Gawd knows! But our Charlie ak-shally *likes* them!—so he leaves *on*, anyhow. Barbie likes classical pieces too. She ain't a bit like me except that she's a winner with the men all right. (Jake Leiter's my fourth, you know—it's tellin' on my looks, bein' married four times!) But all the same, say!" she giggled, her shoulders and bosom shaking, "an artist in Paris wanted to make a bust of my foot! He said I had the cunningest, most *perfect* little foot he's ever seen! But Jake Leiter would have been furious! I c'dn't get away with it! I—"

She was interrupted here by an acquaintance, Mrs. Boldosser, the very pious wife of a pious Elder of the church, who extended a welcoming hand to the returned traveler, as she inquired, "And how did you find the City of Sin, Mrs. Leiter?"

"The City of Sin?" repeated Mrs. Leiter questioningly. "Meaning Paris, Mrs. Boldosser?"

"Of course. The most immoral city in Europe (outside of Germany, of course)—so considered, Mrs. Leiter."

"Oh, I don't know," returned Mrs. Leiter judicially. "I don't know as I'd go *that* far! I adore it myself. I've become a reg'lar Parisite!"

"Hello, Mrs. Leiter!" exclaimed a burly man, reaching over the heads of several people to shake hands with

her. "I suppose you can parlee-voo like a native now, heh?"

"Nothin' doin', Mr. Miller! Got in wrong every time I tried to shoot it across! Went to a hotel once and asked for a bed with two rooms in it! Hot dawg!"

The men of the circle that had gathered about her roared with laughter at this, but the women, shocked at such irreverence in "the house of God," primly withdrew, Jane among them.

She slipped out from the crowd and hurried over to the Manse.

## CHAPTER VII

**A**FTER dinner that Sunday, as Robert had a funeral, he commissioned Jane to take over his "Consultation Hour" at the Mission on Saur Kraut Hill. This Consultation Hour was a sort of Presbyterian confessional, held by Robert at the Mission every Sunday afternoon for those humble parishioners who would not feel free to bring their difficulties and troubles to the Manse or to The Church On The Avenue.

"It's a wonder you'd trust any of your flock to *my* counsel and guidance, my dear!" said Jane humbly. Both of them were keenly feeling the loss of the happy comradeship that had been theirs in those wonderful first months of their married life; and Jane was trying hard to avoid doing anything which could further open the breach which now separated them, though it did seem that everything they tried to talk about, now, revealed their differences rather than their sympathies.

"It's for your reformation, not theirs, that I'm sending you to them," said Robert. "You shall see for yourself how mistaken you are in idealizing the proletariat!"

"I don't idealize them—I only think they're more useful to society than its exploiters and its parasites. I'm afraid, Robert, I shall make a mess of this job! *I* can't speak kind words of comfort to 'the proletariat' and pray with them—my gracious! I shall feel more like apologizing to them for being there among them in such a

patronizing attitude! I warn you, dear, I can't talk piously and sentimentally. I can only follow the dictates of my heart!"

"Hold! Hold!" cried Robert. "To follow the dictates of *your* heart quite uncompromisingly may prove disastrous! If I didn't hate to disappoint the dear people who will be waiting for me at the Mission, with their little problems and troubles, I'd call off the Consultation Hour to-day. Do promise me, dear," he begged her, "that you'll be judicious!"

"It doesn't come very natural to me, you know, dear, to be what you call judicious, but I'll do my darndest!"

"That's a good beginning!" said Robert with a lift of his eyebrows.

"Evil communications—contact with Mrs. Jacob Leiter. Her reactions to Paris are a pure delight to my low-minded sense of humor! I'm living for the day when I may see her and Augusta in what-do-you-call-it—juxtaposition! Augusta never in her life met any one like Mrs. Leiter!"

The mere mention of Augusta's name, Jane saw, was enough to close Robert up. He was as anxious to have her leave the town as Jacob Leiter was.

As the walk to the Mission on Saur Kraut Hill took her by Augusta's apartment, Jane started early enough to stop for a moment's visit, for every bit of time of the little remaining to them had become precious.

To her surprise, Augusta, when she opened her door in answer to the bell, looked startled at sight of her—and troubled.

"Oh!—*you*, Jane dear! I—"

She was very pale and so obviously distraught that Jane was alarmed.

"What's wrong, Gussie dear? Any new developments?"

"No—yes—Jane! You'll have to excuse me! I can't ask you to come in!"

"Is that Police Inspector in there," demanded Jane, "arresting you for not having left town?"

"I'm alone, but I'm expecting a visitor and—"

"Mr. Calloway! You're horrid to be so stingy with him! You might—"

"Please, please, Jane *go!*"

"Such a gushing reception! My goodness! But tell me before I leave, to relieve my suspense, that you're not in trouble with the authorities!"

"No, no!—Oh!" Her sudden sharp exclamation was directed towards the hall below, the door of her apartment being just at the head of the stairs. Some one had opened the street door and Jane, turning to learn who it was that called forth such a look and tone of dismay, was astonished to see, mounting the stairs pantingly, the large, full figure of Mrs. Jacob Leiter.

Augusta started to run down—evidently anxious to intercept a meeting between her two visitors—but in her haste she slipped, stumbled and plunged headlong to the foot of the steps. Mrs. Leiter, grasping the banisters, saved herself from being shoved along with her.

Jane, white and breathless as she flew downstairs to her friend lying prone at the bottom, almost screamed with relief as Augusta lifted her head and sat upright.

But though not killed, nor even stunned, she had not



escaped unhurt. "My knee!" she moaned, unable to rise. "I've twisted it! Oh!"

"I'll phone for a doctor!" cried Jane, turning to run back to the apartment, while Mrs. Leiter, clinging to the bannister, came cautiously down the steep stairs. As Jane flew past her, the woman called after her, "Tell the doctor to come to *my house!* I'm taking the poor child right home with me in my car!"

"No—no!" Augusta faintly protested, "tell him to come *here*, Jane! I'm not leaving here!"

"She can't stay here alone with broken bones! Do as I say, Mrs. Watts!"

Jane, dazed, trembling, hurried to the telephone.

When three minutes later she joined the two in the lower hall, Mrs. Leiter was sitting on the lowest step with Augusta's shoulders supported against her knees.

"Send my chauffeur in here, Mrs. Watts, to help me get her into the car," she ordered Jane.

"No, Jane, no!" Augusta again protested. "I won't go! I—"

She stopped with a moan and Jane hastened to reassure her. "I'll take you to the Manse, dear—Mrs. Leiter will drive us there—"

"No, no, Jane dear, Robert wouldn't like it! Have mercy and leave me here! You can send a nurse to me. I *won't* leave here!"

"You'll not be asked whether you'll go or stay—you'll be *taken!*" declared Mrs. Leiter. "You're going home with me! I'm glad you did roll downstairs and get your leg on the blink!—so you can't run off now that I've got you here at last! For once you'll do as *I* say!"

What the devil your scheme is, comin' here in my absence and settin' up in a measly little apartment, Gawd knows! Whatever it was, I guess my comin' home so unexpectedly has put a crimp in it all right! How long have you been here anyway? Get my chauffeur in here, Mrs. Watts!"

"But I told the doctor to come *here*, Mrs. Leiter—Augusta ought not to be lifted until the doctor examines her!"

"Then please get the brandy flask from under the front seat of the car, will you?"

"Like one in a dream, Jane moved away to obey.

But as she was hurriedly returning from the car with the flask, her heart leapt in her breast to see, a few yards away, coming towards the apartment house, Charles Leiter, looking as always, spruce, trim, elegant; carrying a box of flowers; his face lit up expectantly.

At sight of Mrs. Watts his countenance fell; evidently he wanted Augusta to himself. But as he joined Jane on the step and saw her frightened eyes, her white bewildered face and then suddenly noticed that one of his father's cars stood at the curb, he, too, looked alarmed.

"What is it? Is father in there bullying her?"

"No—she's hurt! Come in and help us; Mrs. Leiter's here!" faltered Jane.

"Augusta hurt! Mrs. Leiter *here!*" repeated Charles, his own face going white, apparently feeling the one tragedy to be quite equal to the other, for he had long dreaded Augusta's meeting his step-mother. Without

waiting for any further information, he hurried into the house, Jane following.

"Oh, son, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Leiter as he fell to his knees beside Augusta. "What awful good luck brought you to our help? This poor lamb's fallen downstairs and sprained her knee! Help me get her into my car—I'm taking her home with me. Here's a glad surprise for you, Charlie-boy! Who do you suppose this young lady *is* you're kneelin' to? Take a look before I tell you—"

"Augusta!" Charles broke in, ignoring Mrs. Leiter. "Is it only your knee? Do you—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Leiter in excited surprise, "have you two met already? Why didn't you tell me that?" she demanded of Augusta. "Why, Charlie Leiter!" she turned accusingly upon him, "why didn't you *tell* your Poppa and I that she was here in town when you saw, as soon as we got home yesterday, how awful worried we were because we hadn't located her in New York? *I* didn't know, till I got her message this noon, that she was *here!* Gimme that brandy, Mrs. Watts!" she cried as Augusta's eyes suddenly closed in a look of suffering. "There, there, pretty!" she said soothingly, bending over the sufferer, "take a sip of this! The doctor'll be here in a minute, now, dearie, and we'll soon have you snug and comfy in bed! Say, Charlie!" she nudged him, "what did I always tell you? Ain't she the prettiest thing you ever laid your eyes on? *I'll* say! Did I stretch it when I said she was a corkin' beauty? Is she—"

The wild look of utter consternation Charles turned upon her pulled her up short.

"Now, Charl Leiter, you don't mean to tell me she hasn't told you who she *is*! Oh, say, that's a scream! Did you ak-shally meet her here and not know she was my dotter? Did you—"

Charles rose from his knees. His face was ashen, his lips colorless, his eyes blazing.

"Will you tell me in a word what you are talking about?"

"Oh, Charlie, has she been stringin' you? I hate to crab her act whatever it is, but—now, Charlie, you needn't get *mad* about it—there's nothing to—"

"It can't be that she—*she!*—is *your daughter!*"

"Sure she is and I'm not ashamed to own her! What's she been puttin' over on you anyway?"

Charles stared down upon Augusta's white face, a look of such rage and hate gathering in his eyes that Jane had a momentary crazy fear that he would lift his foot and stamp upon the prostrate girl.

Then suddenly he bent back his head and laughed shrilly. "So this," he said, "is how you two worked it! In spite of all my dodging, you got me! Cleverest trick I ever heard of! The only flaw in your scheme being that you revealed your hand just a bit too soon! A few weeks more and you'd have run me to earth!"

He turned and fled from the house. Augusta's agonized gaze sought Jane's face as though to ask whether she, too, would fly from her in this hour.

Jane knelt and kissed her.

"Say, Barbie," demanded Mrs. Leiter, "how long have

you been living in this Dutch town anyway? And what have you been up to here? And how *do* Charlie and Mrs. Watts happen to know you so well?"

Augusta again closed her eyes and did not attempt to answer.

"*You* tell me, Mrs. Watts—what's she been up to here?"

"She was librarian of the Leitersville Library. Charles recommended her to his father—he had—"

A shrill peal of laughter from Mrs. Leiter interrupted her. The woman threw back her head and shrieked, her eyes watering, her plump shoulders shaking. "Oh, Lord, dearie, help! I'll explode! It's a scream! Charlie recommending Barbie to Puppa for a job and neither of 'em knowing who she was! Oh! It's killin' me! It's me needs the doc!"

"Here he is!" cried Jane as a shadow darkened the doorway—but the tall, slender man who entered was not the doctor, but the Reverend Clement Calloway.

At sight of him, Mrs. Leiter bridled aggressively. Her husband himself did not resent more bitterly than did she the influence of Mr. Calloway in Leitersville.

When from his consternation at Augusta's plight, it was evident that here was another of the girl's warm friends, there was added to Mrs. Leiter's aggressiveness a look of dark suspicion.

"Well, I must say, Barbie, you seem to have worked hard and fast since you came here!—judgin' by the friends and visitor's you've had in the past fifteen minutes!"

She turned to Mr. Calloway. "If you didn't know

it before, Reverend Calloway, you do know now that this young lady is *my dotter!* So this is where *you* get off the band-wagon if you're cherishin' ambitions in *her* direction—as the goo-goo eyes you're makin' at her seem to indicate you *are!* Nothin' doin', Reverend! Take it from me! I'm carryin' her right up to my house—and you know what Jake Leiter would have to say to you if you showed your face on *his* premises!"

Mr. Calloway stared uncomprehendingly—and Jane, in her vicarious suffering for Augusta in this moment, was actually relieved to see that she had fainted.

Fortunately at this crisis the doctor arrived.

Meantime, Charles Leiter, dashing up-stairs to his room in his father's house, to pack his belongings for removal at once to a hotel (since his work just now made it impossible for him to leave Leitersville altogether), encountered his father on a landing.

"You gave me your word," Leiter broke out in angry accusation against his son, "that that hussy would leave town at once if I withdrew the charges against her and I'm told she *didn't go!* She's still here! Now, sir, if she's not out of this town to *stay* out, by six o'clock to-night, I'll have her landed in—"

"You can land her in hell for all I care!"

"I'll send down there to her apartment right—"

"You can save yourself the trouble—she's on her way here!"

"I won't see her! What's she coming here for? Impudent hussy! To cheek me in my own house after what she's done in this town—"

Charles laughed. "Your wife is bringing her up in



your car! The librarian I recommended to you," he said mockingly, "is your step-daughter!—though naturally I never suspected it! A scheme put up by those two adventuresses to bait me! They almost succeeded! I was going to marry that girl!"

Mr. Leiter, even under the shock and amazement of this astounding information, was moved to an instant's fatherly compassion for the suffering he saw on his son's stricken face, as the young man moved on past him and went up-stairs to his room.

## CHAPTER VIII

**W**HEN the Leiter car carrying the doctor, Mrs. Leiter and Augusta, still unconscious, drove away from the apartment house, Mr. Calloway walked with Jane as she turned towards Saur Kraut Hill.

The rector, having known Augusta but a few weeks, was naturally not so dumbfounded as Jane was at the discovery of her connection with the Leiters, though he, too, was considerably startled to find that one whose loveliness had fired his imagination, to whose brave, strong spirit his own intrepid soul had responded thrillingly, should be so vulgarly allied.

To Jane the thing was incredible, unrealizable. She was sure she must be dreaming.

"But I'm recalling all sorts of things," she said, feeling, even in her burning excitement over Augusta, a tingling delight in this rare treat of a bit of Mr. Calloway's coveted society. "Augusta has always acted strangely when Mrs. Leiter was mentioned! She's always insisted she would never be engaged to Charles, though every one else could see he was in love with her—"

"I should hate to see a woman like Miss Lawrence being wasted against all that money!" Mr. Calloway said. "Great riches, far from being a means by which we may best serve humanity, are much more apt to de-

stroy *us*—incapacitate us for real service, which is first, last and always personal and spiritual service.”

“It’s so unthinkable that Augusta should have had such a mother!” said Jane.

“She told me,” returned Calloway, “that she had been brought up by her father’s brother and had never spent six months with her mother.”

“That’s more than she ever told me of herself! There’s so much to be explained, though—the impression the Leiters seem to have of the sort of girl Mrs. Leiter’s daughter *is*—a spendthrift, unscrupulous!”

Jane’s remarks were cut short by the sudden appearance before them on the sidewalk, of Mrs. Renzheimer, whom neither of them, in their leisurely stroll and absorbing talk, had noticed coming towards them. Her stopping abruptly in their way pulled them up with something like a shock.

They saw that her car was parked at the curb where they all now stood. Ignoring Mr. Calloway, she addressed Jane. “Good-afternoon Mrs. Watts. You are taking a little stroll?”

“Good-afternoon. No, I’m out on business.”

“Business? With the Episcopalian Church?” asked Mrs. Renzheimer with a look of kittenish playfulness, but with a lift of her eyebrows that suggested Torquemada.

“Business for Mr. Watts,” said Jane with the perfunctory “pleasant smile” which, as the pastor’s wife, she had learned to produce mechanically at short notice.

“If you’ve any distance to go, Mrs. Watts, I shall be very glad to drive you to your destination, if I may?”

Jane could have laughed outright at the absurd pro-

posal that she give up her walk with Mr. Calloway for a ride with Mrs. Renzheimer!

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Renzheimer, but I need some exercise."

"Yes?" smiled Mrs. Renzheimer, a long look of sorrowful disapproval resting upon Jane for a moment, before she turned away to get into her car. "Good-by, Mrs. Watts."

Mr. Calloway who was always in a hurry, always tense and almost sharp, had been looking frankly restless and impatient during this brief dialogue.

As they walked on, Jane had a sense of uneasiness in that casual meeting with Mrs. Renzheimer; yet it did not seem thinkable that the woman would or could make mischief just from seeing Mr. Calloway and her walking on the street together.

They had left the Avenue, now, and were going through the business district.

"How will Mrs. Renzheimer take it when she learns Augusta is her step-sister?" Jane rather chuckled.

Mr. Calloway smiled at her tone, but changed the subject. "I'm afraid, Mrs. Watts, we've put up a losing fight for the teachers," he said. "Mr. Leiter is all powerful and he won't have them reinstated."

"We see in Leitersville don't we, that we truly do have in America a ruling class and a subject class," said Jane.

"And although we know that genuine morality is not possible to men of no backbone, yet you'll find that even good Christians will resent the growing independence of the working classes."

"For the working classes to cease to cringe causes great inconvenience to the other classes!" added Jane.

"But if you ask the Christian ministers of Leitersville or anywhere else, to preach against bossism here, against exploitation and oppression in the nation, how many of them will dare do it?"

"They will tell you that that is quite outside their sphere," said Jane.

"Exactly. And when you ask them why, they *don't* answer, 'Because the church treasury can't afford to lose the contributions of its rich members. Because its middle class, too (the laboring class don't go to church), hold their jobs and their homes at the good-will of the rich members.' "

"No," Jane shook her head, "the minister dare not say that; on the contrary he preaches a sermon on *The Antagonism between Christianity and Radicalism*. That was Robert's theme last Sunday."

"Doesn't he realize that Christianity applied would be the extremest radicalism? Can't he see that it's his business to help the Church to get out from under the heavy pressure that our social order puts upon its spirituality, its sincerity, its usefulness?"

"Mr. Calloway, if the theory that the earth moves round the sun interfered with vested interests, my husband would never have accepted it!"

They were now climbing up through the squalid district known as Saur Kraut Hill, but still Mr. Calloway remained at her side.

"A year ago I put up a fight to have this district improved," he said, "to abolish the smoke nuisance here, on

the ground that it injured the eyes, the throat, life itself; and that it made work for housewives. I was told I'd never get anywhere on such a plea, but that there was a legitimate *business* argument against the smoke nuisance—that it paid to utilize the carbon. On that ground it *is* going to be abolished.”

“There still seems to be plenty of room for improvement in the neighborhood,” said Jane, looking about her at the dreary, monotonous, unbroken rows of smoke-blackened frame houses with dilapidated steps, shutters and doors, cinder paths in place of side-walks, no shade trees, cracked window panes, unpaved muddy streets; a picture of dreary squalor.

Mr. Calloway took out notebook and pencil and began to write rapidly. “I shall preface my sermon next Sunday morning with a statement as to conditions here and invite my congregation to take a ‘joy ride’ in their limousines to see for themselves. Have you time to go with me on an inspection of the neighborhood?”

“I’ll go—though I swore off from ever again going ‘slumming’ when an Irish woman that Robert and I called on said to us, ‘Don’t ask me to return your call—I hate goin’ slummin’ myself!’ What’s the use offering ‘charity’ to a neighborhood like this, while we leave untouched the economic conditions which produce such neighborhoods? I asked Robert that and his answer was that the Good Samaritan tended the wounded man and did not trouble himself to find his assaulters.”

“Ah, but if multitudes of Good Samaritans found every day multitudes of wounded travelers by the wayside,



wouldn't they inquire into the cause of such wrong and suffering?"

"They'd be very stupid Good Samaritans if they didn't," responded Jane.

"Every year millions are spent to relieve want, yet poverty still increases. And we who discover and attack the *cause* of this poverty are repudiated by the Church itself as dangerous!"

At the end of a half hour's walking about Sauer Kraut Hill, Mr. Calloway read aloud the data he would spring upon his "defenseless, long-suffering congregation," as he said, the following Sunday.

"A twelve room house containing nine families totalling eighteen people.

"Three hydrants to thirty-three homes.

"Fourteen families living in a space of two hundred feet in an alley.

"Out of a population of twenty-five thousand, two hundred and fifty families living in squalor. That is, more than one-tenth of the population of Leitersville live in poverty in undrained districts.

"—'the big houses with small families  
And the little houses with big families  
Sneer at each other's bars of misunderstanding,'

says the poet, Carl Sandburg."

He closed his notebook and drew her attention to the groups of dirty, neglected, unwholesome looking children playing about in the damp, grimy street, some of them not old enough to be out of their mothers' arms.

"Their mothers work in the Leiter factories or take in washing or go out to do day's work."

Suddenly his eyes flashed, his voice deepened. "It's the crime against the young children that are compelled to live under such conditions as these that makes me wild! If we think it important that our own children shall live in a good neighborhood, have clean and wholesome surroundings, and innocent companions, how can we sit by helpless while other children, just as much entitled to such advantages as ours are, live like this?"

They had reached the door of the small frame Mission and here they stopped.

"I feel like such a hypocritical fool coming here to patronize these people!" exclaimed Jane.

"You'll make something worth while out of it," said Mr. Calloway confidently.

As they clasped hands lingeringly, her eyes met his with a rather tragic wistfulness. She strangely felt in this man's presence and in the meeting of their eyes, such a deep sense of being at home, of perfect ease, of full satisfaction, that parting from him was a wrench.

She thought, when he had left her and she went reluctantly into the Mission, "His wife will know something better than happiness. She will know blessedness! If he weren't a clergyman, I'm sure Augusta would be that blessed woman. But," she thought with a sudden warm indignation, "if Augusta is so damned narrow as to let his profession stand in the way of such a gift of the gods, I shall cease to love her! *Some things are too great a strain on friendship!*"

## CHAPTER IX

THERE were eight women and two men gathered in the main room of the Mission and Jane received them one at a time in a little ante-room.

The women were obviously disappointed at finding her instead of her handsome young husband in the "Confessional," as she termed it, and the men were embarrassed.

Most of their "problems" were astonishing to Jane; and, with her faculty for sensing drama, exciting.

"I got a son workin' his way through college," a shabby but neatly dressed woman presented her difficulty, "and I wanted to ast Reverend, oncet, if he didn't think some of the things they're learnin' that there boy ain't awful on-scriptural! He's bein' learnt somepin that sounds like *shimmy*—tshem-istry, that's it! He comes home fur over Sabbath and he kin turn water into wine that easy! Most as easy as Christ done it yet! Yes, *any*-how if he can't! He'll take and pour two perfeckly white waters together and they'll made *red* yet! Yes, I tol' him when I seen it, 'I don't b'leeve it!' I says. 'You're got yourself hoo-dooed!' He wouldn't leave me drink the wine! He done it to prove me it wasn't no miracle Christ done! I wouldn't listen on him! I made him shut up! I just wanted to ast Reverend Watts, oncet, if he thought Jimmy *ought* to get learnt such outlandish things!"

Jane offered what inadequate advice she could, won-

dering how on earth Robert answered such questions.

"I think, sometimes, that Jimmy has went dippy with his book-learnin'!" the mother declared in parting, not at all satisfied (as Jane, with a troubled mind, perceived), with the "help" she had received. "He says the eye of a needle Christ talked about was a *gate*! Now mind you! A gate yet! That's what he gets learnt in that there tshem-istry he studies. Ain't it fierce?"

Jane soon realized, as the others came on, that this first inquirer had been a comparatively superior type.

The next one was a middle-aged woman with an amazingly coarse and common face, dressed in soiled shabby finery and speaking with a glib cheerfulness that ill-fitted her gruesome theme.

"My name's Mrs. Baumiller. It was Miss Geistline before I was married twenty years ago," she began. "Mrs. Baumiller now. I wanted to ast Reverend whether if he was me he'd git out a warrant agin my son-in-law fur threatenin' to kill my dotter Mame," she stated in a tone bordering on gayety. "Mame she left her man and come on home to me last Sa'rdays because she got wise, don't you know, that her man was runnin' round with another lady, and leavin' his own wife *set*; Mame she says what gets her peeved is that the party George's runnin' with ain't got a wery good reputation that way—*you* understand," (with a ribald wink that appalled and fascinated young Jane). "And to be sure, Mame she wasn't goin' to stand fur *that*—George leavin' her set whiles he's havin' the time of his life! *Oh*, no, not our Mame! Take another guess if you think it! Our Mame wouldn't take that off *any* feller! So she up and

come on home to me. Do you *blame* her? Would *you* stand fur it, Missus, if *Reverend* got to runnin' round with another chicken?"

"I—I don't know," Jane feebly murmured.

"Well, then, here last Mondays, whiles I was standin' at my washtub in my back yard, George he come to our place and he leaned agin our back fence and hollered at me, 'You tell Mame to git her coffin ready till Thursdays a'ready, Mom, fur I'm a-goin' to *finish* her!' And I says to him, 'Why, George!' I says. 'Yes,' he says, 'I'm a-goin' to shoot her!' he says, and I says, 'Why, *Goa-urge*!' 'Yes,' he says, 'I'm a-goin' to kill her till Thursdays a'ready!' Now, Missus, I wanted to ast Reverend if he was me would he have George arrested?"

"Are you afraid of him?"

"Well, you know yourself, Missus, how it is about them things—a body never can tell—he *might* come round with a pistol. And I'm a woman this here way—it would make me awful nervous if he did come in there tryin' to shoot up our Mame! I'm a woman that's funny that way! Sich things gets me upset."

"A murderer about the house *would* be upsetting," Jane granted.

"Yes, ain't so!" nodded Mrs. Baumiller. "Say, that's some swell piece of lace you're got round your neck, ain't? *Do* you think Reverend would say fur to git George arrested?"

"If your daughter's life is in danger, you certainly ought to—er—seek the protection of the law," said Jane, pleased with this technical-sounding phrase.

She felt very dissatisfied with herself as she saw this

blithe mother take her cheerful departure to go to the police station. What *ought* she to have said to her? What did Robert say to such strange people? Perhaps it wasn't surprising that he could not "idealize the proletariat." But no, that was absurd—look at Jake Leiter, Mrs. Renzheimer, Judge Bergstresser, the boss-controlled school board, all the people for whom there was so much less excuse—

She was surprised to recognize in the next inquirer, Mr. Ibach, one of the Elders of The Church On The Avenue, who lived directly across the street from the Manse. Why did he come out to Sauer Kraut Hill to consult his pastor when they were neighbors?

She saw that he was looking terribly worried.

He was a stolid, heavily-built man, so slow of speech that she had to resist an impulse, while he slowly stated his case, to prod him up.

He explained in great embarrassment that he had wanted to get "Reverend Watts'" advice on a domestic matter, but that perhaps Mrs. Watts would really understand better than her husband what he ought to do—He had preferred to come out here to Saur Kraut Hill to consult "Reverend" because he hadn't wanted Clara (his wife) to see him going over to the Manse, she'd want to know what he was doing over there—

His trouble was that although he gave his wife as big an allowance as he could afford, she ran up bills "on him" all over town which he could not pay. Neither reasoning, persuasion nor threats seemed to have any effect upon her. She was buying clothes, jewelry, furs, furniture, every day of her life—there was no end to it. No, he



didn't want to divorce her (he looked shocked at such a suggestion from the minister's wife). There weren't any grounds for divorce. Notify the shops not to charge things to her? "Well, she'd up and go to Phil-delphy if I did," he said with heavy melancholy. "But I got to do something to stop her. As an Elder of our church I don't want to do anything too conspicuous, you see. I thought mebbly Reverend Watts could advise me. What do you think about it, Mrs. Watts? You're a woman—mebbly you can think of something that, in similiar circumstances, would stop *you*."

Jane put her mind on it. It interested her. She knew "Clara" to be a well-meaning, kindly creature, though selfish and dreadfully light-minded.

"We must find," she told Mr. Ibach, "something your wife loves even more than she loves squandering money, and work on that. What other weakness has she?"

Mr. Ibach scratched his head and thought. "She cares a lot too much, *I* think, for what folks say—for keeping up with the best—you know—she wants to live as good as the people on the Avenue that can afford it better'n we can. Nothing gets her goat like having our neighbor, Mrs. Mumper, that keeps a gardener, see me workin' in our front yard in my old clo'es. Clara thinks Mrs. Mumper'll look down on her for it. She—"

"I've got it!" cried Jane. "We can cure her, Mr. Ibach! But," she added regarding him appraisingly, "it will take fortitude on your part. Have you lots of nerve?"

"Try me. I got to do something—and right away too."

"At our Sunday services you always pass the collection plate—well, next Sunday you must put on a disgracefully shabby suit of clothes for the morning service—"

"Clara she wouldn't leave me do that!"

"Manage to get her to go to church before you do. Then you come in in your old clothes and walk up the aisle to your pew and sit down beside her—and what can she do? When she has to suffer the mortification of seeing you collect the nickles in that shabby old suit and worn, faded necktie, and Charlie-Chaplin shoes and frayed shirt cuffs," said Jane, "because you had to sell your good clothes to pay her debts—"

"But all the cash my best suit would bring wouldn't pay one-hundredth of her debts!" protested the literal Ibach, though he looked impressed with Jane's idea.

"Tell her that you'll have to go about shabby for the rest of your life to keep her in fine raiment. Now, Mr. Ibach, if you have the resolution to put that through, you'll have her!"

"I believe mebbby it would work!" he said grinning. "But," he suddenly added, relapsing into despondency, "she'd snoop about and find my good clothes no matter where I hid them."

"Give them to me to keep for you until you've got her so cured that you can safely tell her you can now buy them back."

"But, Mrs. Watts," said Mr. Ibach gravely, "that'd be lyin' like the dickens!"

"Well, an Elder of the Church On The Avenue ought to be used to telling lies—you tell so many to God every Sunday."

Mr. Ibach looked as though he were trying to determine whether to be shocked or amused at such unprecedented ideas from his pastor's wife.

"Ain't you the little divel though!" he remarked uncertainly.

"If you're afraid to tell a lie to your wife (who tells so many to God) then really sell your clothes to me and I'll sell them back to you after we've cured your wife."

"That might be better," he considered it gravely.

"I thought that would appeal to you, being an Elder of our Church; the consciences of Elders are peculiar things; quite beyond my simple understanding."

"Are they?" Mr. Ibach seemed surprised. "That's funny now! It never struck me that way. However, Mrs. Watts, I believe it'll work mebbly! I'm a-goin' to try it out on Clara anyhow!"

"Have you the courage to go into church in very shabby clothes? To take up the collection looking like a tramp?"

"I'll be able to stand it a lot better'n Clara will! Yes, I can put it through all right. Only thing bothers me is—how the dickens I can get her to go to church ahead of me."

"Dear me, Mr. Ibach, haven't you any imagination? No wonder poor Clara has to take it out in flinging money 'round! Well, I'll help you. I'll call up your wife Sunday morning and ask her to come over to the Manse about something or other and I'll keep her there until it's time to go to church and then I'll make her go over with me. You'd better come into church a few minutes

late, so that you'll be sure that she's already in your pew and can't help herself."

"All right, Mrs. Watts!" said Mr. Ibach with as much enthusiasm as his stolidity could summon.

He rose to go, holding out a thick, expressionless hand. "I thank you kindly, Mrs. Watts. It ain't the kind of help or advice I was lookin' for, but mebbby it's better! You're an awful bright little lady! That I must give you anyhow! Now—er—I can trust you, can I, to keep mum about this?"

"What takes place in this Confessional, Mr. Ibach, goes no further."

As he was leaving, he suddenly turned back again, a troubled questioning in his eyes.

"Mrs. Watts, would you mind telling me what you had reference to—about the Elders lying to Gawd?"

"I had reference to your asking God in your prayers and hymns to make you good Christians, when you don't mean it—you wouldn't for anything have Him interfere with business to such a disastrous extent—it would be Bolshevistic!"

"Well—I don't know—" Mr. Ibach ruminated. "I try to be as consistent a Christian as I otherwise can—but anyhow it was to save sinners, not the righteous, that Christ shed His atoning blood. Gawd's par can save the blackest sinner."

"'God's par?'" asked Jane bewildered. "What's that?"

"'To as many as received Him, to them gave He par to become the sons of Gawd,'" quoted Mr. Ibach—and

Jane turned crimson with embarrassment at her failure to understand.

"To be sure," added Mr. Ibach, "we mustn't take advantage of Christ's having paid our debt to Gawd, and think now we can do *anything*—"

The next to enter the ante-room was the proud mother of a daughter who had literary aspirations, as to whose ability the mother wished to consult "Reverend." She had a sample of daughter's work with her, but she seemed doubtful as to the value of Jane's opinion.

"If I would have knew that Reverend wouldn't be here to-day, I would have came last week and would have gave him dotter's story," she said as she rather hesitatingly unfolded the manuscript, while Jane wondered whether the daughter's grammatical style would be anything like the mother's speech.

The mother began to read in a tone of awed admiration and Jane listened with an ever growing sympathy for Robert, thinking how tactfully and kindly he would have handled every one of these cases.

"—Maybelle possessed every mental endowment and personal charm to attract the virtuous. Her pleasing person, her light and flowing hair, the brightness of a complexion that equalled in whiteness the new fallen snow; the rose of beauty and the bloom of youth that mantled her cheek and above all, the expression of a blue eye, vying in mildness with an April sky, moistened as it was with the dew of heavenly charity, and shaded with the longest eye-lash he had ever beheld, were quite suffi-

cient to captivate a man whose heart was less warm than St. Clair's."

"'Quite sufficient' for anything!" thought Jane, repressing her inclination to say, "Pluck out that 'longest eye-lash he had ever beheld' and send it to a museum of Natural History!"

"Now you can see for yourself," the mother pointed out to Jane, "that to write a piece like this, it don't take no dummy!"

"No, indeed!" responded Jane cordially. "Your daughter has a marvelous gift of language."

"Och, yes, she even wrote a piece for the newspaper once and her pitcher was in the paper!"

"That was nice. Tell me about her—what does she do?—besides write."

"She got elected to teach in Miss Boldosser's place in the High School," the mother said with pride.

"Then she's a college girl?" asked Jane in surprise.

"No, but she near finished at High School, all but a year and a half."

Miss Boldosser, a college graduate, an experienced and able teacher, had been deposed because of her affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers, to be succeeded by the author of this "piece!" Would it be the pupils, or Mr. Jacob Leiter and his clan, that would be the gainers?

Jane promptly lost interest in the author, though she concealed the fact from the fond mother and dismissed her with praise and encouragement for the writer.

There was now a succession of plaintive appeals for



material help from women whose husbands were out of work. Jane, feeling humiliated before their shame in asking for "charity," took down their names and addresses and promised them speedy relief from the "charity fund" of the church.

On her way home she could not help feeling some misgivings as to the manner in which she had conducted the "Consultation Hour." But though Robert looked rather disapproving when she dramatically gave him an account of the afternoon, the amusement he could not conceal cheered her a bit.

His reception of the news about Augusta was characteristic; he pitied Jacob Leiter and his son and daughter for the embarrassment they would have to suffer from the vulgar sensation Leitersville would inevitably enjoy over the fact that the librarian who had been arrested for fighting against the Leiter autocracy was Jacob Leiter's step-daughter.

## CHAPTER X

**A**S Jane walked up the Avenue next morning towards Jacob Leiter's home to see how Augusta was faring, her sense of embarrassment at facing her friend in her present strange situation conflicted with her very lively curiosity and interest in the drama of it. Would Augusta at last become communicative about herself and explain all the dark mystery of her life? Or would she continue to be as she had always been—reserved, noncommittal, putting it up to her friends to accept her just for what she was in herself and on no other basis?

The Negro man-servant who opened the front door to her at the Leiter home, gave her in charge of a maid who took her at once up-stairs to the invalid's bedroom.

She found Augusta propped up on a couch in the bay-window of a luxurious but luridly-furnished chamber, a large table at her side containing books, magazines, papers, writing material and fruit; looking extremely cosy and comfortable in spite of her pallor and melancholy, and the strained, desperate expression of her eyes as of a trapped animal.

"Nothing more than a sprained knee, but I shall not be able to stand on it for some days," she said soberly as Jane bent and kissed her. "I'm glad you've come while my mother is still in bed—she never gets up before noon. If she were up she'd not leave us alone for a minute and of course I want to talk to you alone."

Jane drew an armchair to the side of the couch, opened her jacket and took off her gloves.

"Have you lost all respect for me, Jane, for deceiving you so long?"

"I decided yesterday afternoon, dear, the only thing that would ever make me cease to respect you would be your turning down Mr. Calloway because of his profession."

"His profession will cast him out long before I shall have a chance to! There's no place to-day in any Christian Church for a man who refuses to compromise with his ideals—if he has any. We profess a religion which no one even pretends to follow."

"Are you going to tell me the story of your young life, Augusta?"

"Yes—briefly and at once, to get it over. When I was a year old my father left my mother, taking me with him. When I was two and a half he died and his brother, Lawrence Harrell, a widower, took me. He died when I was sixteen, leaving me money enough to put me through college and to keep me from want when I'd be out of a job. But at once my mother, whose husband at that time (her third) happened to be rather poor, began to prey upon me, borrow from me, charge to my name things she wanted—until finally to protect myself not only from being fleeced of what little I had, but from what was worse—mortification and disgrace—I decided to hide from her under cover of another name. My name is Barbara Augusta Harrell. I took Uncle Lawrence's name and during all of my four years at college I succeeded in eluding her. It was quite by accident that

she found me just after my graduation. But even then she didn't learn the name I had taken and I soon got out of her way again.

"Understand, Jane, I never lived with her, she never did a thing for me except disgrace me, and I have no feeling whatever for her except aversion and shame. That's one thing I have in common with Charles Leiter!

"But while my mother didn't know where I was or what I was doing, I was not left in ignorance of her career, for the newspapers were soon noisy with accounts of her marriage to Jacob Leiter.

"When I met Charles in New York and he, not knowing who I was, while of course I knew who he was, would every now and then, as we became more intimate, speak sneeringly of his step-mother, you may imagine what I went through!

"It was in a rash spirit of adventure that I let him get me the library position here—partly because you were here and I was lonely; partly because I knew my mother was in Europe at the time; partly because I was getting to care a lot for Charles—"

She paused, toying thoughtfully with the cord of the luridly gay negligee of her mother's which she wore.

"Then I began to hear—from you and Charles and even from Mrs. Renzheimer—those extraordinary tales of Mrs. Leiter's daughter—her wild extravagance, her buying furs and jewelry and clothes and charging them to her step-father, her receiving a large allowance from him (I never of course received a cent from him and never shall!) You see, being a frugal Pennsylvania Dutchman, he doesn't allow his wife nearly all the money

she wants, so she's been supplementing her allowance by getting him to pay her another allowance for me and by gifts to herself which she's charged to her husband in my name!—a mink coat, a diamond pendant—trifles like that!

“But she went just a little too far in playing her daughter off like that; for Mr. Leiter had got to the point where he put a detective on my track. That frightened her and she was making every effort to find me and have me come here to visit her, counting on my youth and (as she tells me) my ‘charm’ to appease her husband’s wrath and indignation—and counting on my filial sense not to give her away!

“She maneuvered, too (as I think you know, and as Charles once or twice casually mentioned to me!) to bring about a marriage between him and me!

“When I took the library position I intended to drop it before my mother came home, for I meant to continue to hide from her—but in view of all the awful things I was hearing about ‘Barbie Harrell,’ I decided I must wait on in Leitersville and see my mother and have an understanding with her—and yesterday when you came to my apartment, I was expecting her to come to me in answer to a note I had written to her—when this accident happened. And here I am in J. L.’s house!”

“Talk about ‘life’s little ironies!’” breathed Jane. “How does Jake take it?”

“My Mother hasn’t let us meet—she’s holding him off by telling him I’m too shattered to stand an interview yet. My accident plays into her hands too beautifully! My awful sufferings as she tells them to him must nec-

essarily soften his wrath against me. (I'm really feeling perfectly calm and never more husky in my life.) From her report of his state of mind, I gather that he's much madder at my having opposed his power in this town than at my supposedly charging up big bills to him."

"Isn't your mother ashamed to look you in the eyes?"

"I doubt whether she has ever known a sense of shame in her life! She thinks Mr. Leiter is the one who ought to feel ashamed for not giving her more money. She told me last night in her own original style, 'Play your cards cleverly, dearie, and land Charlie and we'll have this Leiter bunch nailed!' I asked her how she could expect a man like Charles to marry a girl he believed capable of running up bills against his father—but she laughed at me, hooted at my 'innocence,' assured me that when 'a man wants a woman, nothing stops him'—as I'd find out in Charles' case.

"I asked her why she was so anxious for me to marry her step-son and she said he could introduce her and me to 'his swell, exclusive Philadelphia friends,' whom she had always had an ambition to know! You see, Jane, I am quite shameless in discussing her with you, because I don't realize that she belongs to me—she seems so entirely outside my life that it is only by the greatest effort of my imagination that I know she is my mother.

"When I told her I was determined to have an understanding with her husband, she almost had hysterics. She says he'll divorce her if he finds out what she's been doing. I suggested that she had had the divorce habit so long, it would not be anything new to her. But she argued that she had never before landed such a financial



prize as Jake Leiter; that she's no longer young; that Jake Leiter would manage the courts in such a way that she would never get a cent of alimony; he has often told her he would never pay any woman alimony and she's sure he wouldn't. 'To pay out money without gettin' any return for it isn't his way of doin' business,' she told me. She is pleading with me almost pathetically not to 'give her away.' I want your advice, Jane. What must I do? I thought of getting you to ask Robert to break the truth to Mr. Leiter and beg him to be merciful to his wife—"

Jane shook her head. "Robert would not risk getting himself in wrong with either Mr. or Mrs. Leiter to defend you, dear, I'm afraid!"

Augusta considered this for an instant. "If that's so, I don't see how you stand Robert!"

"He would have excellent, unanswerable reasons for his refusal—satisfying to him at least. Would it help you to have *me* explain to Mr. Leiter?"

"You're too unpopular with him since your Civic Club speech—and since the chance you gave Sally Renzheimer yesterday afternoon! My dear, I'm afraid you're very imprudent!"

"'Chance?' For what? What do you mean?"

"Chance for revenge! My mother tells me Mrs. Renzheimer came here last night to talk to her father about it and even the astounding discovery that I'm her step-sister did not chill her ardor for using the chance you gave her for avenging herself against you!"

"Does she have to have a chance? I should think she were inventive enough to create one. *I* can create situations to order as easily!"

"Yes, I've had my experience of your creative and histrionic gift!" said Augusta grimly. "No need to draw my admiring attention to it! Are you really unaware of the awful opportunity you gave Sally Renzheimer yesterday?"

"I met her on my way to Saur Kraut Hill and Mr. Calloway was with me. Was that the 'chance?'"

"And you declined her invitation to be driven there in her car—showing, on your part, a taste for Mr. Calloway's society which, in the wife of the Presbyterian pastor, was imprudent."

"It's middle-class and low-minded to be 'prudent.'"

"Sally is telling every one she sees that you and Mr. Calloway are seen together too much."

"One could hardly be with such a man too much! He's so good for one's soul!"

"Don't say that to Mrs. Renzheimer. My mother assured me he was a fortune-hunter and had designs on me in the hope of my inheriting a fortune from my stepfather! Oh, my dear, how shall I endure my mother's conversation for the ten days the doctor gives me on this couch!"

"I'll come up and counteract the effect as often as possible. I'm wondering how I can manage to attend Mr. Calloway's church some Sunday. I do want to hear him preach!"

"His thrilling sermons are not for you, my love. You'll have to continue faithfully, every Sabbath, both morning and evening, to listen to the Reverend Robert Watts, 'as is your bounden duty.'"

"Dear Robert is writing one just now on the text, 'Why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt?'"

"That's a text Robert lives up to nobly!"

"Why can't I go to hear Mr. Calloway? Just once, Augusta? Please! Do you really think I can't?"

"Don't give Mrs. Renzheimer such a whip-hand as that in a little place like this!" warned Augusta. "You know that in the eyes of Leitersville your place on Sunday is at your husband's feet!"

"Oh, well!" sighed Jane resignedly.

"Mrs. Renzheimer is saying she doesn't understand how the wife of the pastor of such a large congregation can spend so much time on the street!"

"It's the only thing ministers wives do have to spend—time!" said Jane ruefully.

"It's your opinion, is it, Jane, that I must talk to Jacob Leiter myself?"

"Ask Mr. Calloway's advice."

"I don't want to bring these vulgar, degrading affairs into my relation with him!" said Augusta with a sudden flush of self-consciousness.

"Well, I only hope you won't be so weak as to let any consideration for your mother prevent your protecting yourself. If you don't tell Mr. Leiter the truth, your mother may keep on wronging you."

"I shall have to enlighten him of course. But let's talk of something else now—I'm so mortally sick of it all!"

A half hour later, Jane having said good-by, promising to drop in every day, if possible, until Augusta was

well, saw and heard, as she was going down the wide, high stairway, Mrs. Leiter in the hall below, speaking to the Negro butler who stood by the open front door—

“Tell him he can’t see her! Neither now nor any other time!”

“But he wants me to ask Miss Lawrence herself—”

“Tell him there’s no such a person as Miss Lawrence in this house! Tell him that my dotter has promised her puppa she’ll never see nor speak with him again! And that Mr. Leiter and I think it very impertinent of him to come to this house after all he’s done against us! Tell him that! Go on, Alfred!”

Alfred turned back to the door to deliver the message.

At sight of her pastor’s wife, Mrs. Leiter became, as always with Jane, very effusive—Jane never could understand why.

“Oh, if it isn’t dear little Mrs. Watts! Why, how d’do, dearie! How did you find my little girl? Awful miserable, isn’t she? To think of that poor child battling all alone out in the cold world to earn her living, with a step-father so hoggish rich he can’t count his coupons! Wouldn’t it make you sick? Well, I hope her hard days of drudg’ry and poverty are over, now, and she’ll settle down and get married. With that face and figger she’s got (and as soon as I’ve made Jake Leiter come across with the goods and adopt her), she ought to draw a prize! But if I didn’t look after her, Gawd knows what jinks she’d be up to—with that fourflusher, Calloway, snoopin’ round after her! I’ll put a crimp in his little game all right! Can you see me leavin’ her throw herself away on an insignificant minister of a church that isn’t even on the

Avenue?—when she could marry most any one!—even a fellah like our Charlie! Ain't Charlie the tony swell, though! I think our Charlie," she said defiantly, as though to an adversary, "is really the most perfect gen'leman, without exception I ever met up with. He sure does deliver the goods! Barbie thinks an awful lot of Charl! I've been tellin' him how much my little girl appreciates his bein' so genteel! So you and Barbie were college chums! I near died of surprise when she told me. Here I've known and liked you so well ever since you and Reverend came to Leitersville, and I never once dreamed you knew my darling dotter! Barbie ought to be smacked for keepin' it from you that I was her mother! Weren't you surprised when you found it out? Isn't it the unexpected that always happens, as Sal Renzheimer would say. Oh, say, don't Sal give you a pain, with her everlastingly quotin' her George and makin' him out to be such a damned soft mess, when every one knows he's a hard-boiled old soak!"

As soon as Jane reached home, she wrote a note to Mr. Calloway, telling him that she had overheard his dismissal at the Leiters' and that of course he knew, without any assurance from her, that Augusta, being helpless for the present, was not responsible for or aware of anything that was done or said at her step-father's house; and that Miss Lawrence's friendship for him could not be affected in the least by her enforced temporary acceptance of Mr. Leiter's hospitality.

Mr. Jacob Leiter, while waiting for his step-daughter to recover sufficiently to permit of his having, as he told

her mother he was going to have, an extremely pertinent heart-to-heart talk with her, worked off some of his spleen against her by his wholesale denunciation of women's colleges, where, he declared, she had learned her "Bolshevism"; and by his withdrawal of a twenty-thousand dollar subscription towards the fund for a new co-educational college to be founded in Leitersville.

"Colleges have come to be hot-beds of radicalism and I won't support 'em!" he told his pastor who was treasurer of the fund for the new college. "I'm all the time running across outrageous things that college professors say that make me hot! Look-a-here, will you, Reverend!"

He drew a paper from his pocket and pointed with a thick forefinger while he read aloud:

"'Professor Franklin H. Giddings, eminent American economist, says, 'Shall the chief and controlling means of production in the United States, including mineral and forest resources, water power sites, railroads and means of communication, patent rights and the enormous funds of loanable capital, be owned by a billionaire Four Hundred who, in virtue of such ownership, will be able for all practical purposes to own a hundred or more millions of us ordinary human beings; or shall we, in our collective capacity, own the means of production ourselves and proceed to work out the reality of a democratic republic?'"

"There, Mr. Watts, if that ain't Bolshevism, what do you call it?"

Robert agreed that it was very unsettling doctrine.

"I should think, Robert," Jane suggested, after Mr. Leiter had gone, "that that ought to recommend 'radical-



ism' as having something in it worth investigating—if our seats of learning find it good. Whatever education breeds can't be bad."

"Oh, yes, it can. Education much too often breeds skepticism."

Jane was silent.

"At the same time," said Robert judicially, "of course I don't disparage education. I highly approve of our literacy test for keeping out undesirable immigrants."

"But the newspapers announced the other day that we had deported a group of Communists from Ellis Island consisting of twenty-three men and women all of whom could read from three to five languages. You see, it is the illiterates we want over here, not the linguists. The illiterates are not so dangerous, apparently, as the enlightened."

"You seem to have formed a habit, my dear, of taking a perverse and unsympathetic view of everything I say!" was Robert's reply in a hurt tone, as he walked away and left her.

Jane drew a long, quivering sigh; her life with Robert was becoming very difficult.

There slowly developed in Leitersville, in the days following Augusta's speech at the Civic Club, something like a reign of terror over the succession of quiet and undramatic dismissals of officials at the Iron Works and at the other few big industries of the town; and it was observed that these discharged officials were, in every case, either the men that had openly espoused the cause of the discharged teachers, or close relatives of the women that had dared to stand by Augusta; with the result that

more and more of those who had been supporting the teachers were dropping away, leaving less hope every day that the teachers would be reinstated, except on the terms of the school board—their resignation from the American Federation of Teachers.

There came one day to the Manse, when Robert happened to be absent, an elderly Pennsylvania Dutch farmer, about sixty years of age, of a type that Jane met twice a week at the market house, but that she had never encountered in any more personal way; a rugged old man with toil-roughened visage and hands, clumsy clothes, and a countenance as inexperienced as a child's.

He seemed dubious about stating his errand to a woman, Pennsylvania Dutch farmers not holding in very high esteem the judgment of women, the two influences which so long held back Pennsylvania from voting for woman suffrage having been the corrupt politics of Philadelphia and the vote of the Pennsylvania Dutch. To lift the Pennsylvania Dutchman's heavy weight over that blockade to woman's free development marked Woman's True Sphere, was going to require some momentum.

"It's the preacher I did want fur to see," the farmer demurred, scanning Jane disparagingly.

"I'm sorry he is not here. Can't I help you?"

"Well, I'm Al Eck."

"Aleck? Aleck what?"

Mr. Eck stared for an instant—then laughed. He laughed and laughed; he couldn't stop. Jane laughed with him in sympathy, though she didn't know what it

was about. When he could find his breath, he explained that his name was Albert Eck.

This excruciatingly funny mistake on Mrs. Watts' part put the farmer at once on such a friendly footing with her that he became quite informal and began to take his sweater off over his head. "It has too warm indoors; I make my sweater off."

"Let me help you," Jane offered as the old man, bending nearly double to perform that acrobatic feat, almost took a somersault.

But before he could reply the sweater was off. "There!" he said breathlessly. "Missus she says to me, still, 'Why don't you stand yourself up when you make yourself off?'—but I near have to stand on my head to git the darned thing off! Susie, my gran'dotter she knitted it fur me and I think, still, I wisht she'd knitted it to open and shut oncet."

"Now, then," asked Jane when they were at last seated, "what can I do for you, Mr. Eck?"

"Well, you see, my son, Ezry, he worked at Leiter's Iron Works and his dotter, Susie, she teached in one of the primary schools here. An awful smart girl Susie is. Too smart, I still say to Missus, fur a girl yet!—though, to be sure, if she's a school teacher she needs it too. Well, she up and joined to that there American Federation of Teachers and got fired and now ol' Leiter he's fired Ezry, too, off his job—fur all, Ezry he never joined to no Union! Knowed he darsent so long as he worked fur Leiter—or fur any one else in Leitersville. Ol' Leiter he says if Ezry can't make his dotter resign

from the A. F. T. next thing he'll be joinin' to the A. F. L.—so he might as well git out of the Iron Works right aways before no harm's done. So now my son and his family's destitoot! There's five of 'em and no one earnin' a cent!"

"Employers couldn't be so autocratic if it weren't for the unemployment situation!" said Jane.

"Yes, Ol' Leiter he tol' Ezry, he says, 'There's a plenty to take your place,' he says. And after all the liberty bonds Ezry bought off of him yet to hold down his job and prove he was patter-ottick! Yes, and Ezry he even up and joined to 'ol Leiter's Bible class yet! 'Now,' he says, 'this here's what I git fur bein' sich a dirty dog as to join to that there damned Bible class!' Ezry he's awful bitter. He says, 'I don't blame them Capitalists fur puttin' it all over us if they kin. But I blame us suckers fur standin fur it!'"

"That's the point," Jane agreed.

"Ol' Leiter he tol' Ezry that if Susie'll resign from the A. F. T. they'll both git their jobs back. But Susie she's that stubborn-headed, she says she'll starve first! So I come here to ast the preacher will he reason with Susie a little. Him bein' educated and all, he kin tell her the arguments that way—"

"There are no arguments in favor of her resigning from the A. F. T. except the supreme and unanswerable one—starvation! She might bear that, but when there are four others involved, I see no help!" said Jane hopelessly.

"Mebby if you talked to her, Missus—a lady might be better able to infloonce her—"

"My cook is leaving. Could Susie come here and help me? Can she do housework?"

"If she kin? Well, she cleans wery nice and pertikkler—that she does. Most too pertikkler, I say! Why, she's that pertikkler she won't use our cow's milk when she's out at our place, but insists she wants this here sanctified milk or whatever—I mean fertilized—ain't?" he appealed to Jane.

"Sterilized? Certified?" she offered.

"That's it!" he nodded, relieved. "But I tell her if she's so pertikkler clean as what that comes to, it's a wonder she wouldn't want to live out in the country where you git air that ain't breathed over so often by so many folks! Me I'm a man this here way, I got to have fresh air or I git so bad in my stummeek. Folks thinks I'm well when they see me in the face—but if they could see me in the stummeek!"

He shook his head over what they'd see.

"Yes, here a while back when the flu was, it give so bad in my stummeek that Susie she took my heat—with sich a glass toob, you know? She sticked it in my mouth and when she seen what it registered, she run to our next neighbor that has one of these here Hoosits—you know—"

"Hoosits?" asked Jane. "No, what's that?"

"One of these here things hangin' on your wall—you know—sich a Hoosit."

Jane did not know.

"Why, you take it off a hook and put it to your ear and holler in, 'Hoosit?' "

"A telephone!"

"Och, yes; I couldn't think there fur a minute! You must think I'm wonderful dumb, Missus! Well, I am, too. That I must give myself! Well, Susie she hollered up a pinch doctor and he come and pounded and pinched me till, if I'd had my strength, I'd of hit him one back!"

"An osteopath?" asked Jane, enjoying herself.

"That's what! Say! The way you know everything! You're grand educated, that I got to give you!"

"Can Susie cook?"

"If she can cook? Well, now—" He hesitated, looking mortified; for a Pennsylvania Dutchman to have to admit that a woman related to him cannot cook, is to admit humiliating disgrace. "Well, now, to be honest, Susie's awfully likely to cook her fire out! Got her mind on her education too much and leaves her fire cook out!"

"Can she bake pies?"

"Well, now, yes, her pies are pretty good; all but the crust. She ain't so handy at the crust."

"A girl that has taught school would be teachable," said Jane hopefully. "Tell her to come to see me and we'll talk over the situation."

"Till when would you want to hire her then?"

"Next week if she will come."

"Well, I'll see oncet if she will. To be sure she never expected to hire out, high educated as what she is! But I guess she's got to come to it. I'm helpin' Ezry's family all I kin, but I got my own troubles too. My cow ain't givin' no milk because we left her calf too long *at*. So now we ain't got no butter neither. So it's hard all round."



"Tell Susie she can have the use of books here and that I'll help her prepare for a higher teaching position," said Jane—and the old farmer went away comforted.

But watching him from the pastor's study window as he plowed down the Avenue as though walking over a rough field, Jane wondered whether Robert would consent to employ in his household one of the rebellious teachers.

Suddenly her heart leapt in her breast as she caught sight of Mr. Calloway, with his quick, tense stride, coming down the Avenue towards the Manse, at the same moment that she saw, also, Robert coming from the opposite direction.

To Jane it seemed as though Robert must always necessarily feel, in coming face to face with Mr. Calloway, an embarrassment, a sense of guilt. But she knew that what he did feel was a mild contempt for the rector's lack of "common sense," and a complacent consciousness of his own superior judgment and "normalcy."

The two ministers met at the Manse steps and Robert, rather hastily and abruptly touching his hat to the rector, would have come directly into the house, but that Mr. Calloway stopped him,—and after exchanging a few words, Jane saw to her surprise and excitement (for to her any contact with Mr. Calloway was an adventure) that they were entering the door together.

So engrossed was Mr. Calloway in what he was saying to Mr. Watts, that his greeting of Mrs. Watts, as they met in the study, was unflatteringly brief, though the look that met hers, as for an instant he clasped her hand, was intimately friendly.

He was explaining to Mr. Watts that the High School pupils, both boys and girls, had sent to the school board a mammoth petition, signed by nearly every pupil in the school, asking to have reinstated their two favorite teachers that had been discharged. The school board had ignored the petition. No hall being available for a mass meeting of protest, every auditorium asked for having been refused, Mr. Calloway wanted to know whether Mr. Watts would allow a mass meeting to be held in the large Sunday School room of The Church On The Avenue.

"I would not dream of allowing these secular matters to be dragged into the Church!" Mr. Watts protested, shocked.

"But the churches," Mr. Calloway pointed out, "are asked to drag themselves into 'these secular matters,' for they are requested to join in the May day 'patriotic exercises' for which the school board has ordered all the schools to combine—churches and schools together—to stimulate the spirit of Americanism and to instill greater loyalty in the young,' the *Gazette* tells us! It's of course intended to offset all the Federation-of-Teachers trouble. The school board has at the same time refused to allow the school buildings to be used for any labor meetings of any character."

"I cannot blame the school board," said Robert with his carefully judicious air. "If laborers were not so unreasonable and tyrannical in their demands and so headstrong and lawless in their actions, capitalists would not treat them and their Unions so drastically."

"Do you really believe that in all the bitter conflicts waged, the wrong is always on the one side?"

"Well, not all, perhaps—"

"Yet in a conflict the law seems always against the laborers. You never hear of the militia being ordered out against employers!"

"Well, why?" asked Robert reasonably. "Because employers don't use mob violence and upset society!"

"Don't they? How about the Patriotic Legion's raids on the homes and persons of those whose opinions happen to differ from theirs? And the government report of the West Virginia mine troubles? I'll tell you why the militia is called out to protect capitalists and not laborers—because Labor is the weak and handicapped fighter in the struggle—handicapped by lack of resources and by hunger! It's never a fair fight—it's a fight with bare hands against a foe in armor from top to toe!"

"You radicals would have a raw, untrained mob take over the reins of government and knock the bottom out of things!"

"Haven't capitalists knocked the bottom out of Europe—or was it the radicals who did it?" Calloway smiled. "And wasn't the bottom knocked out of the South to abolish slavery?"

"You'd destroy our present social order and have mad disorder, reversal to barbarism!"

"We have it now!"

"Mr. Calloway, the laborer has no higher ideal than shorter hours and higher wages!"

"His ideal is much higher. He is struggling for a different status for his entire class. His unrest and dissatisfaction are to his credit. For under Capitalism he is a mere tool; he exists for another man's profit. He is

fighting for freedom, for his manhood! As Christians, shan't we help him?"

"A beneficent Christian Capitalism is much more practicable," Robert affirmed conclusively.

"That's what we're supposed to have, isn't it? And yet, even in this country with, just now, its millions of unemployed, and its underpaid professional classes, the bottom is being knocked out from all but the privileged few. It's to keep the bottom under *them*, isn't it, Mr. Watts, that you oppose what you vaguely call 'radicalism?' But the only people who are proposing an effectual program for putting in a new bottom, who are offering a cure rather than a mere palliative called 'charity,' are denounced as anarchists, socialists, Bolshevists—and the Church joins in the cry!"

"I'm afraid, my dear Calloway, I think you and your kind very dangerous demagogues!"

"Dangerous to the exploiters of the world, I hope we are!"

"Dangerous to society!" Robert gravely corrected him.

"No, society's saviors! It is our politicians and exploiters that are the social menace. Who were more dangerous to society during the war—the conscientious objectors whom we imprisoned for 'blocking the war,' or the profiteers who blocked it by stealing twenty-two millions at Hog Island?—whom we did not imprison, you'll remember! It is only for opinions that we imprison men!"

"The capitalist class builds up—you radicals would tear down," said Robert.

"The capitalist class builds up its own fortunes and a

bulwark of defenses around them. It tears down and exploits the fortunes of the masses. And the Church is with the exploiters, not with the masses!—because the Church, requiring large economic support, is tethered to Capital. There are one-fourth of a million preachers holding jobs; and the Church as a part of the present order and dependent upon it, untaxed by the present order, must vote for it, support it, pay for it, with her very life! Our Ship of Church is making for the rocks and her pilots and captains refuse to turn her course in another direction! I had supposed that if those few of us who do have a vision of Christianity's true meaning—a vision of human brotherhood—would stick to the poor ship, we might save it. But we are so hopelessly outnumbered by those who do not and will not see! So, Mr. Watts, you won't lend us your Sunday School room to speak for the freedom of the teachers to join a Federation?"

"I'm sorry I can't oblige you, my friend."

Mr. Calloway dropped the discussion and turned swiftly to Jane. "I've written to Miss Lawrence, but as I've had no reply, I think probably my letter was withheld from her. So I'm going to ask you," he smiled, taking a letter from his breast pocket and handing it to her, "to be my letter-carrier, if you will be so good?"

"And I promise you an answer," said Jane, while Robert looked on disapprovingly.

When Mr. Calloway had gone and Jane, after lunch, was seated before Robert's typewriter, absent-mindedly and laboriously copying for him (with her two first fingers) an exhaustive expansion of his text, "Why shouldst

thou meddle to thy hurt?" she came upon a sentence near the end of the sermon that caught her wandering attention:—

"Let us not lose faith in the Church simply because we occasionally find among us some who do not measure up to the Christian idea. Were there not in Jesus' little band of followers petty ambitions and rivalries? There were in that narrow circle a betrayer, a coward. Yet Judas made the supreme sacrifice for his sin; and Peter redeemed his fault by life-long devotion and a hero's death."

Jane thought, "Therefore, let us be very lenient in our judgment of Jacob Leiter and the Employers' Association. Yes, for them, as men, we can't be too charitable. But for their aggressions against us all, their usurpation of power and privilege and profit—for these things we must have no charity!"

And if that, she asked herself, was her conviction, how was she going to live out her life as the mate and co-worker of a man who refused to cast a breath of reproach upon any evils of the world so long as those evils were not universally unpopular?



PART IV

“HERE I STAND, I CANNOT OTHERWISE”



## CHAPTER I

**I**N spite of his unpopularity with most of his leading members and all of his Vestry, Mr. Calloway's church was always crowded.

"With riff-raff and young people!" his opponents scornfully explained.

His announcement, one Sunday morning from the chancel, that he would, next Sunday, preach an indictment of our present day education, religion, and civilization as being outworn, roused an intensity of expectation in Leitersville during the intervening week that rivaled in interest even the school teachers' plight.

Augusta not only withdrew her objection to Jane's breaking away for once from The Church On The Avenue, and going to hear Mr. Calloway's "indictment," but urged it.

"If for no other reason than that you may bring to me a reliable report of what takes place at St. Marks!"

When Jane announced to Robert that she was going to hear the "indictment," he protested very decidedly against it. But she, closing his lips with a disarming kiss, told him that here was one of the places where she was going to stand on her rights as a voter and a citizen.

Now the only reason Mr. Calloway had been permitted to remain in Leitersville so long as he had, was because, while he had "made himself a nuisance" to the men of the Employer's Association, he had come to be greatly

loved and admired by a great many other people. His method of attack, though it had always been unflinching and irresistible, had never been denunciatory towards individuals, only towards conditions and deeds. With men and women of whatever estate, he was unfailingly sympathetic.

In spite of the fact that the newspapers of Leitersville refused to name his name in their columns, the public always found out all they wanted to know as to the subjects and hours of Mr. Calloway's preaching.

His address that Sunday morning, made before a congregation that packed every aisle, created a stir in the town that frightened his Vestry into action. Such fearlessness and directness of assault against their method of life could not be borne. It threatened the stability of society—that is, of those in power. (The rest of society could hardly be more unstable than it was!)

He began by speaking of the slow and painful, but sure and steady, climbing upward of the masses during the past one hundred and fifty years, towards freedom and power.

“Through unspeakable suffering and strife, the people are at last coming into their own. Shall we who call ourselves civilized, who call ourselves Christians, throw the weight of our influence on the side of the few who control all the sources of wealth, and against those who so sorely need our aid?—against the just aspirations of the workers of the world?”

He named some of the reasons why it was desirable for thoughtful, earnest and disinterested people to help the workers in their struggle upward and thereby help the

world to a more civilized, Christian, just and decent social order.

“The twenty-four thousand strikes and lockouts of the past twenty years—in which state and federal militia have had to be called out, to quell riots,—are a sufficient indictment of the inefficiency of our system; of our education, our democracy, our religion! How do we dare to talk of the sanity or efficiency of our present social order—a system the spirit of which has tainted and poisoned every one, even the best of us; a system that drives men who are naturally religious, clean and kindly, into actions of which they are ashamed, into becoming rapacious, tricky, hard, in order to save their prosperity! We are constantly being warned against the evils of a socialized government. But how could they compare with those of our present order? Did you ever see men stand in line to secure jobs?—praying to the gods who hold the very means by which they and their children may live; cowed by the needs of their wives and children? If you did, you’d know that we’ve not yet got rid of human slavery. Remember, ‘Despotism is the permanent temptation of the strong.’ A few days ago the Suburban Transit Company advertised for fifteen laborers. Six hundred men formed in line in front of the yards. When the gates were opened to admit the applicants, there was such a rush from the rear that the first man, Samuel Schenfeldt, was knocked over and stepped on by several hundred men before the police could rescue him. He was taken to our Leitersville hospital. I sat up with him for three hours last night. He died this morning.

"The struggle to get and hold jobs is, for the mass of men, so engrossing as to blot out the very sun in the heavens and everything that makes up the higher life of a human being. Jane Addams says that an investigation of our insane asylums will reveal 'how many patients become insane because of black terror lest they lose their work; how many through malnutrition when they have lost it, and how many because of the sheer monotony of their employment.'

"We are told that industrial crises are unavoidable. Not in nature, my friends, only under our present order.

"We are told of the unspeakable sufferings that go with reconstruction, with the reorganization of society. But keeping up ancient wrongs and refusing to right them before it is too late, will cause vaster suffering. Why will we not take warning from history, from the French Revolution, from Russia? Don't be afraid of the menace of your laboring people. Fear, rather, the real menace of the world to-day—the professional politicians! They are your social abnormality! A politician is a man who violates every ideal of his own soul—as well as the ideals of the society he exploits; who will sell his dearest principles for a vulgar power; who sees none but false values in life; whose spirit is deformed, distorted. And it is politicians, my friends, who now hold all the places of power in this country! Fear them; not your laborers; not your reformers who are trying to establish human brotherhood on the earth!

"I affirm that it is impossible, under a system that lifts a few into great wealth and keeps a vast multitude in poverty, for any one to live the Christian life. Or so



difficult that few men try. When they do try, they become eccentrics, like Tolstoi.

"Outside the doors of this church are standing your limousines—and around the corner there are people starving. Is this a Christian social order? We toss them a crust to-day from our abundance, but to-morrow they are again hungry—and those who would re-construct society to prevent want and the degradation of receiving charity, are by us repudiated, denounced, deported, persecuted, imprisoned! Is this our Christianity?

"Business men who really believe in the Christian life are to-day placed in a tragic situation and the Church, instead of challenging the world to a higher standard of life, finds itself on the defensive; forced into an apologetic attitude for the low standards obtaining under a Capitalism upon which the Church itself is dependent for its very existence. If the Church cannot lift up society, then society will drag down the Church.

"For instance, a western diocese that voted large sums for starving Chinese, expelled a Bishop (on trumped up heresy charges) who suggested a means of averting strikes by a coöperative or democratic government of industries. Our Christian Church members will give abundantly in response to every appeal. But they are not going to submit to any scheme by which their profits are lessened—no matter how beneficial that scheme may be to society at large.

"I recently heard a member of this Church rejoicing almost ghoulishly that in the steel strike the mounted militia had ridden rough-shod over the men, women and children of the striking laborers! 'That's how to treat

'em!' he exclaimed in my presence. 'Rough as hell! That's what'll bring 'em to terms!'

"It is the firm conviction of several of my church members, I grieve to say, that strikes should be put down with gattling guns. But is it the violence and lawlessness of *capitalists* that we read of in our newspapers?

"The aims of those who would socialize our government are humane, as the aims of Capitalism are not; they are therefore nearer the Christian ideal. Human fraternity, not selfish antagonism and rivalry, is the expression of the true Christian spirit. A socialized form of government would compel bad men to act like Christians, as Capitalism now compels Christians to act like selfish robbers! In a society organized on the basis of brotherhood, Christian ideals would for the first time have a chance of being realized; doing unto others as you would have them do to you; serving the common good instead of exploiting it.

"Why, I ask you, are not all the churches of this land presenting a solid front in support of a new social order and against one which makes men cowards and hypocrites? In the name of the Church of Jesus Christ, I declare that humanity must be delivered from its foul slavery to corrupt politics and Capitalism!

"My friends, the kingdom of God is long in coming! But I know it is on its way—and man's eyes shall see its glory!"

The rector stepped down from the pulpit.

Instantly the senior vestryman of St. Marks, Mr. Egbert Brubaker, a large man with a red face, who looked

as though he were what is called "a good liver," stepped forward to the chancel and faced the audience.

He addressed the congregation:—

"As a vestryman of St. Marks I wish to announce that the Vestry is not in sympathy with the side-tracking of our services by the rector and that such acts are in direct conflict with the sentiments of the Vestry. I wish to apologize to this audience, as coming from this Church, for the statements of the rector, the way he has hamstrung capitalists who are among our finest and most Christian citizens. I am very familiar with ministers as a class and I never found any class that gets government affairs worse mixed up than ministers.

"I apologize also for the innuendoes aimed at some of our leading citizens in Leitersville, our capitalists and politicians.

"The time has come when I think our rector will have to confer and advise with his Vestry as to his sermons hereafter!"

Mr. Brubaker took his seat.

The closing prayer followed; and presently the very rafters of the church seemed to reverberate with the fervent voices of the boys and men of the choir in the recessional:

"O beautiful for patriot's dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears.

America! America!

God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood,  
From sea to shining sea!"

## CHAPTER II

**A**N indignant and outraged Vestry met the next day to talk it over.

"We don't pay him a salary to tear down instead of build up this parish! Why, he's trying to destroy our parish!"

"I'd like to ask Mr. Calloway who built this Church anyhow and who pays his salary—the Socialists and Bolsheviks *or us business men?*"

So they passed a Resolution and summoned the rector to hear it.

"Resolved:—that it is the will of this Vestry that the rector shall preach no more sermons on Labor and Capital, but confine himself to preaching the Christian religion."

When Mr. Calloway had heard the Resolution read, he cheerfully responded, "Pass your Resolution if you want to, gentlemen—if it amuses you. But you don't seriously expect me to pay any attention to it, do you? A dozen such Resolutions couldn't possibly affect me—or change my course by a hair's breadth. I shall go right ahead as though you had not passed it. I take my preaching orders from a Higher Authority than yours."

The Resolution was laid on the table. The Vestry knew the limits of its authority and its consequent helplessness.

They appealed to Mr. Jacob Leiter. He, with every

one else in Leitersville, was hearing on all sides burning discussions of that scandalous sermon.

Mr. Leiter said, "We must get rid of this man. Let it to me."

They knew when Mr. Leiter said, "Let it to me," that Mr. Calloway's days in Leitersville were numbered—unless he could be induced to change his course.

Mr. Leiter sent a note to Mr. Calloway requesting him to send him, if he would be so kind, a complete copy of his sermon of the previous "Sabbath."

Mr. Calloway, instead of sending the sermon to Mr. Leiter's office, carried it there himself.

"I must frankly tell you, Reverend Calloway," said Mr. Leiter, "what I want with your sermon (if you want to call it a sermon, which I would not) I want it to criticize in our newspapers."

"So I supposed. Very well."

"You'll leave me have it for that?" asked Mr. Leiter, holding out his hand for the manuscript.

"Certainly. On one condition," replied Mr. Calloway, making no move to surrender the manuscript.

"Oh, you make a condition?"

"On condition that you publish in your papers the entire sermon and not extracts from it dragged out of their setting and given a false meaning."

"Well, I don't know that they'll have space in the papers for the *en-tire* sermon. But," added Mr. Leiter genially, "we'll do our best to oblige you, Mr. Calloway, and meet your condition."

"Your written promise to publish my entire sermon, Mr. Leiter, in a column paralleled to your criticism, is

the condition on which you can have the manuscript," Mr. Calloway stated.

"Oh, so you're refusing to leave me have your sermon, are you? You're afraid to, heh?—knowing you darsent! Knowing you're got criminal seditious utterances in that sermon! Well, your refusal to leave me see the manuscript is all I want to make you look awful small and cheap in this town! Refuse to give your sermon to the newspapers! Ha! Looks awful funny to me, Mr. Calloway!"

"I do not refuse to give my sermon to the newspapers. On the contrary, I stipulate that it must all be published, or none."

"And I tell you we'll publish as much as we got space for. So then," said Mr. Leiter, again holding out a plump hand, "please leave me have the manuscript."

"When I have your written promise to publish it in full."

"That's as good as refusing to gimme it! I can make you look mighty queer, Mr. Calloway, if you refuse to gimme it!"

Mr. Calloway was not to be budged. "I won't have the sermon quoted misleadingly," he reaffirmed.

With a sinister threat from Mr. Leiter as to what the law could do to preachers of "sedition," and an unperturbed resoluteness on the part of Mr. Calloway, they parted, Mr. Calloway taking his manuscript with him.

Ten minutes later Mr. Leiter was addressing a group of men in the Leitersville Men's Club, telling them that Calloway, knowing he could not prove the accusations he had made in that Bolshevistic speech he called a sermon,



and fearing to have such statements seen in print, had refused to let him have the manuscript for review in his newspaper.

Meantime, Mr. Calloway chancing to meet Jane on the street, related to her just what had passed in Mr. Leiter's office.

"And now he has rushed off to the men's club to make what mischief he can out of my refusal to let him have the sermon," said the rector quite serenely; as one who, having committed his cause to fate or Providence, let it rest there.

Jane's eyes as she heard him flashed with a sudden gleam of wicked inspiration. Jane was nothing if not resourceful.

"Mr. Calloway, will you trust me with your manuscript? I think I know how to get ahead of J. L.—if you'll trust me."

Mr. Calloway placed the manuscript in her hand. "I'd trust Anna the Prophetess with my immortal soul!"

"Better call me Machiavelli! Have you another copy of this sermon?"

"Yes, a carbon copy."

"If I fail," said Jane as she left him, "we'll all hang together."

She hurried almost on a run to the office of the *Evening Bulletin*. She was so excited that she stood outside on the pavement for a minute until she had got herself in hand. Then she sought the editor.

"You know of course, Mr. Klinefelters, that Mr. Leiter asked Mr. Calloway for his sermon to be published in the *Evening Bulletin*?"

"He said he was going to get it from Mr. Calloway if he could. I'm to write a criticism of it for the evening edition. Got to make it caustic as the deuce!"

"Mr. Calloway had lent it to me, so I brought it right here—as Mr. Leiter wanted you to have it at once. The full text of the sermon," said Jane coolly, but very definitely, "is to be published in a parallel column with your criticism."

"All right," nodded Mr. Klinefelters quite unsuspiciously. Small town newspaper men are not necessarily alert mentally—read their editorials. "Those are Mr. Leiter's orders, are they?"

"Mr. Calloway made that a condition of giving his sermon for review."

"I see. All right, Mrs. Watts. Thank you very much."

When Jane, trembling from her own daring, came out of the newspaper office, she saw, by the clock over the post office across the street, that it was just half past ten. She had got the manuscript in just in the nick of time to go to press. By eleven o'clock it would be too late for Mr. Leiter to stop its publication. In that intervening half hour Mr. Klinefelters would have written his stupid criticism. Now if only Providence were kind and kept Mr. Leiter off the scent for a half hour! It was taking awful chances, to be sure!

At noon of that same day, Mr. Leiter telephoned to the editor of the *Evening Bulletin*, but was told that he had gone home to dinner. Mr. Leiter left a message for him to the effect that he was to state in to-day's paper (or, if it was too late, then in to-morrow's) that "Rev.

Calloway" was afraid to give his sermon for publication, and so forth.

The clerk who took down the message was unaware that the sermon was already on the press. He laid the written message under a paper-weight on the editor's desk and went away to his own work in another part of the building.

When the editor, upon his return, read the message, it did not enlighten him as to the true state of the case. He only thought how pleased Mr. Leiter would be when he saw in the evening paper that Mr. Calloway had, after all, given up his sermon for publication. The editor was having it featured large on the front page.

"Calloway didn't dare not give it up!" he shrewdly thought. "Not when Jake Leiter told him to!"

When that evening Mr. Leiter, in complacent expectation, opened up his *Evening Bulletin*, his chagrin made his family fear a brain storm.

Jane was radiantly delighted with the brilliant success of her ruse. It was hard to have nobody by to admire her cleverness in having outwitted Jacob Leiter himself. It would not be prudent to tell Robert about it—*his* admiration would be so tempered, not to say snowed under, by his disapproval.

Robert read the sermon in the *Evening Bulletin* and pronounced it "outrageously injudicious."

"But," he added, "Leiter didn't use his usual good sense when he published this sermon in full in a parallel column with this weak, absurd criticism of his editor!—the sermon being anything but weak!"

Jane remained judiciously silent.

"I should think Leiter would have wished to repress, rather than publish, such an 'indictment' against all that he represents!" continued Robert.

"You think the indictment just and, as you said, 'strong?' "

"Strong, yes, but greatly exaggerated. More likely to do harm than good. Destructive, rather than constructive."

"Clearing the way for a better order isn't necessarily destructive of what is worth keeping, is it?"

"To lay emphasis on the *good* things of our social order is more inspiring than to indict its bad aspects."

"But, Robert, you don't hesitate to indict bad aspects like saloons, Mormonism, Sabbath breaking, white slave traffic, and other quite unpopular evils."

A ring at the front door bell, followed by the startling announcement that Mr. Jacob Leiter wished to speak to "Reverend," prevented Robert's replying.

### CHAPTER III

JANE ignominiously fled not only from the study but from the house. Here was a contingency she had not considered! Mr. Leiter had of course easily discovered who was responsible for the publication of the sermon. "And now what's to pay?" she wondered in consternation.

She flew up the Avenue to tell her plight to Augusta, who would of course be both interested and sympathetic; especially as the story concerned Mr. Calloway; for Jane had, during the past week, been the bearer, daily, of extraordinarily thick missives, which she had christened "biscuits," between the rector and the invalid.

Augusta proved satisfactorily appreciative of Jane's courage and craft in having foiled Jacob Leiter's designs, but very apprehensive of the retribution she might have to suffer.

"This comes of marrying a minister!" she said gloomily.

Jane sighed. "'There's a divinity that shapes our ends rough—hew them how we will!' But," she darkly warned Augusta, "wait till a fascinating minister proposes to you!"

"He'd have to get out of the Church before I'd consider him," said Augusta, but her tone was not confident.

"He might as well, for he certainly could not remain

in it long after you became his lawful helpmate!" said Jane. "Have you seen Charles yet?"

"No," replied Augusta, coloring deeply. "He is staying at the hotel, you know."

"He will forgive you," said Jane with assurance.

"His feeling about my mother and me is very strong and I quite sympathize with it. You know," said Augusta with heavy melancholy, "I'm seeing more of my mother now than I've ever seen in my whole life before—and every day's closer acquaintance with her increases my sympathy for Charles!"

Meantime, the Reverend Mr. Watts, closeted in his study with Jacob Leiter, was learning, to his unspeakable chagrin, that his wife had again endangered his position by taking up the cudgels against the chief Elder of his church in favor of the Elder's worst enemy!

"Calloway put her up to it of course!" Leiter bitterly affirmed. "Can't fight his own battles without the help of a woman! Put her up to lyin' to my editor!"

"Jane wouldn't lie!" Robert said. "That is," he faltered, "well not deliberately lie! I'll call her in and ask her—"

"No," interposed Leiter, "I darsent see her—I might forget my manners and speak to her as a perfect gentleman hadn't ought to address a lady, Mr. Watts! I darsent trust myself! I'll let her to you to deal with! I got enough flip-flop females of my own to keep in order!"

"I don't know what to make of her!" said Robert despairingly.

"What's got into the women these days!" cried Leiter.



"Mrs. Watts for instance, getting in so thick with Reverend Calloway that it'll soon be the scandal of the town!"

"Oh, come, Mr. Leiter!" cried Robert, his face suddenly crimson, "Mrs. Watts hasn't seen or spoken to Calloway more than three or four times since we've lived here!"

"Now look-a-here, Mr. Watts, if she wasn't in with him pretty thick why would she do a thing like this for him?—a thing she must have known would work against you! She ain't so dumb but what she knew it wouldn't help *you* any for her to get in wrong with me the way she's done!"

"She has her own convictions, Mr. Leiter, and must live up to them, I suppose—not up to mine. These are the days when a wife lives her own life, you know, not necessarily her husband's life."

"Well, then, all the more need for a minister of the Gawspel to be awful partikkler in picking out a wife! You sure picked out a lemon, Reverend! It's an awful pity, as fine a minister as what you are, to have hit it so bad! If you weren't what you are, I'd never stand for what Missus is, you bet you! And I ain't standin' for it much longer! That I got to warn you of! Another trick on her part like this one to-day, and sorry as I'd be to part with you, Mr. Watts, it'll have to be good-bye!"

"Mrs. Watts is very young, Mr. Leiter, and very enthusiastic. Her intentions are right—however injudicious her—"

"Yes, yes, we know how dangerous good intentions are

when they ain't diluted and moderated by good judgment! Well, Mr. Watts, I've said what I've said—a word to the wise, you know! Now, young man, you take my advice and have it out with your wife, once and for all!”

But “having it out” with Jane, when a half hour later she returned home, proved as futile as discussion and argument usually prove—each side being, at the end, more confirmed than ever in their own convictions.

“I did a good deed,” Jane maintained, “in averting a great wrong—the maligning and misrepresenting of Mr. Calloway!”

“Your good deeds seem always at cross purposes with my interests, however! You might consider my interests at least as much as you consider Mr. Calloway’s!”

“Your worldly or your spiritual interests, Robert?”

“They can’t be separated!”

“I’m afraid they can’t be joined, dear!”

“Are you trying to ruin me, Jane?” Robert irritably demanded.

Jane had no answer to such a question as that.

## CHAPTER IV

**C**HARLES Leiter, detained by his father's business affairs which required his lawyer's presence in Leitersville, chafed miserably at being unable to flee from the still dangerous proximity of the girl whom he had so passionately idealized and who now lived in his image as a lurid adventuress; a land-Lorelei luring him, even yet, almost irresistibly, to the doom of loving her.

The one beautiful dream of his rather hard and cynical youth was shattered—the fragments that were scattered in his consciousness still bearing bits of loveliness to keep him in mind of what he had lost.

His father, in their daily business interviews, either at his office or at home, marveled at the white, stricken face of his son. He had supposed him to be quite too self-centered to be capable of such suffering as his countenance betrayed in these days.

"You were awful hard hit, Charlie, weren't you?" he asked sympathetically one morning when they were alone in his working-den at his home, going over some legal papers. It was only when Charles was obliged to consult with his father about his affairs that he went near his home. "The girl is a handsome young devil, that's a fact! When I think of how I sat jawin' away at her down there at the library one morning, with never a suspicion who she was—gosh! I don't know whether

to be tickled at her cheek or raging mad at her ingratitude! I've not seen her since she came home—Katy guards her from me as if I was an ogre—and of course the girl hates to face me after the way she's acted. How she could have ever expected to get away with it!—but say, Charlie, you can be thankful for your escape—the girl's a confounded Socialist!"

"I'd be one myself if I were not the lawyer for a bunch of capitalists!"

"Aw, you're talkin' through your hat! But anyhow, as you are a corporation lawyer, what would you look like married to an anarchist?—the same kind of a lemon Reverend Watts has picked out for a wife! If Watts wasn't a minister of the Gawspel, he'd ought to divorce that woman!"

"It is because Augusta is your wife's daughter and because she deceived me—plotting to meet and trap me—that I loathe her! Not because she happens to have brains enough to see that society as it's organized could be improved!"

"Well," said Leiter, scratching his bullet head, "the girl's got me guessin' all right! A girl that for two years has been accepting a liberal allowance from me and at the same time runnin' up such bills as she run up on me—me that never even had the honor of her acquaintance!—and then in the face of all that to have the cheek to come here to my town and make a radical speech before the whole population against my 'unearned increments' and what-not—'increments' that she spent to a fancy figger! Gosh! Can you beat it?"

"It must have been your wife that bought those furs

and jewels and charged them to you, not your step-daughter," said Charles suddenly.

Mr. Leiter turned upon him in startled astonishment. "How do you know that?" he asked with a gasp.

"I should think you would have guessed it yourself long ago," said Charles to whom the idea had but just this minute occurred. "That sable coat she pretended to have bought in Paris at a bargain, she no doubt got before she went and made you think her daughter had charged it to you!"

"My Gawd!" said Leiter, his face going apoplectic, "I never once suspected it! Charlie, you're got a head on you!"

"Not at all," returned Charles modestly. "Deceived as I've been in your step-daughter, I'm not so stupid as not to realize that she is quite incapable of some things. Perhaps she did connive with her mother about all those expenditures—I don't pretend to know—a week ago such an idea in connection with her would have been inconceivable!—but now," he said bitterly, "the bottom's dropped out of everything!—I don't know what to think or believe about any one or anything!"

"To think that Katy'd—oh, say! that woman has no moral sense! I don't know how to hold her in check! She's got me stumped! I wonder what will be her next expedient for fleecing me, now that you've got this one spoiled for her!"

"Is your step-daughter's father living?" asked Charles. "Or," he shrugged, "don't you know?"

"He died soon after his divorce from Katy—"

A sound at the door leading from this work-den into his

wife's bedroom, made them both look up—to see Mrs. Leiter in a diaphanous kimono, standing in the doorway.

“A divorce from Katy?” she repeated inquiringly, strolling into the room.

Her husband did not rise, but Charles, always ironically and elaborately ceremonious with his step-mother, stood while she walked to her husband's chair, seated herself on the arm of it, and patted his head. Jacob scowled sulkily, but he did not repulse her.

Charles, looking grim and cold, his eyes downcast as though ashamed to look at his father, reseated himself, maintaining a rigid silence, while the husband and wife wrangled. “Is Charlie putting you up to a divorce, Jake? At your time of life, Puppa, it would be very imprudent to go cutting up any jinks like that, leave me warn you! For what I'd put you through in a divorce court, beloved treasure of my heart, would certainly make your blood curdle! And as I often tell your Puppa, Charlie-son, the alimony I'd claim (and get, you bet you!) would cost him a lot more'n he ever left me spend—cheap skate that he is! Well, I guess! What's the matter? You two look as solemn as Pilgrim Fathers!”

“I've discovered,” said Leiter harshly, “how you've been deceiving me about your daughter!”

“Oh, that's the mess, is it?” she retorted, trying to cover her alarm under an exaggerated indifference. “Well, leave me know THE WORST—and die!” she cried melodramatically—then shrieked with nervous laughter. “How did you find it out? You've not seen Barbie, have you?”



"Charlie guessed what I was too thick-headed to see for myself!" Leiter bitterly told her.

"I often told you, Jake Leiter, that in some things you hadn't the sense Gawd gave an oyster! It takes our son Charlie to bring home the bacon! Well, Jake," she admonished him severely, "leave this be a lesson to you! Leave this teach you to give your wife money enough to get what she's got to have, without having to resort to playing tricks on her own poor child!"

"Have you no sense of shame about you?" Leiter bellowed at her.

"Sure I have! I'd be awful ashamed to be as stingy as what you are, Jake!—I certainly would!—to drive your own wife to working you for money, when you've got so much you can't count it! How'd you get that way? I don't enjoy doin' underhanded things any more than you do! It makes me awful nervous! I bet you don't feel as bad over *your* tricks to get money, Jake,—though to be sure, yours are on a big scale and not the measly little jobs I got to stoop to!" she ended on a note of keen personal injury which utterly bewildered her exasperated husband.

"If ever again," he blustered, "you try to get goods on such false pretenses—"

"Well, to be sure that game's up," she impatiently interrupted him. "I can't put it across again! Give me credit for some judgment, Jakey darling! Imagine me being such a nut as to try to shoot a trick off on you after you'd found it out! Don't be simple!"

"What you'll be up to next," growled Leiter, "Gawd only knows!"

"Jacob! Don't take Gawd's name in vain so long as you're an Elder in the Church! It's inconsistent!"

"If only I was a common, low-down laboring man, instead of a gentleman," said Jacob, "I could warn the stores not to give you credit!"

"If that ain't the limit! He'd like to be common if he could, but he can't! He's sorry he's a gentleman! Oh, Gawd! Help! Wishes he was 'low-down!' Ain't it a scream? Never you mind, Jakey, you'll get there some day if you live with me long enough!" she laughed. "Say, Charlie, you ought to have been a sleuth! Wouldn't he make the swell cop, Puppa? All the lady criminals would be falling in love with him! And can't you see him spurnin' them and breakin' their hearts? No low-down criminals for our Charlie! Well, anyhow, Charlie, you know, now, that Barbie's all right! She's lyin' over there in her room cryin' her heart out because she thinks Charlie don't respect her! But, indeed, Charlie, her morals are as pure," she added sentimentally, "as the driven snow! What is driven snow, Charlie? Isn't it queer that it's purer for being driven? Yes, I often wish I was as sinless as my innocent child!" she said, her voice shaking with emotion. "But it seems we can't expect to be as good as our children are, can we, Jake?" she plaintively asked her husband. "You couldn't be near as clean and wholesome and upright and dignified and genteel as Charlie is if you tried. And I!" she quavered,—“Oh, well,” she suddenly dropped her sentimental tone, “no use workin’ the tremolo record! Say, Charlie, you’ll certainly make some woman a grand husband! And I often say to your Puppa that my Bar-

bie will certainly make some good man a grand little wife! Don't I, Puppa! Barbie takes after her own Puppa, my second husband—no, my first—leave me see—yes, my first.” She shouted with laughter at herself. “Sounds as if I wasn't sure, don't it? No wonder if I do get mixed up sometimes, married as often as I was! Some married life!” she chuckled. “And Barbie's every bit as attractive as ever I was—some would think more so. She always had lots of admah-rers! But she's seelect, leave me tell you! She wont take up with just any one, don't you think it! Well, I guess not! Barbie's choicy. Now an intellec-shal and strictly mau-ral young man like you, Charlie, is just the sort of fellah she's apt to take to. No frivolity for Barbie! You ought to see the books she's been readin' since she's been sick—high brow junk called so-shol-ogy. I'd have the woolies if I had to wade through such dry punk!—about ‘un-earned internments,’ and capitalists exploding laborers (I'd always supposed it was the laborers that exploded things) and a sublimated press and surplus incomes (I'd like to have a whack at a surplus income!) The only kind of book *I* like to read is a silly book!—the sillier the better! Oh, Charl!” she chuckled, her shoulders shaking, “I near expar with laughing whenever I think of your runnin' with Barbie all these weeks and never knowin' who she was! Ain't it a scream?”

Charles' father suddenly joined in her laughter. “It *is* funny when you stop to think of it, Charlie!” he said.

Charles, pale, rigid, silent, offered no response; waiting to go on with his work as soon as she should leave him alone with his father.

"Now, Katy," Leiter abruptly cut her off, poking at her with his elbow as she sat perched on the arm of his chair, "Charlie and I've got work to attend to—you leave us alone."

"All right," she amiably agreed. She was feeling infinitely relieved at having her difficulties so easily disposed of, and as there was now no reason for keeping her husband and her daughter apart, she cordially invited him to come to see the girl at her room.

"Barbie's so much better, you can see her any time now, Jake," she announced as one conferring a favor and an honor. "When'll you come?"

"You told me only this morning that it would give her a nervous fit if I went near her! I've no desire to see her!—until she's ready to come to me and apologize for the way she's acted in this town and promise to behave in the future!"

"But, Puppa, if you don't come and make her welcome in your own home, she's that proud and sensitive, she'll up and go to New York and get a job!—and think of the disgrace to you of having your wife's own little girl slavin' away her young life in that great cold-hearted city, with you rolling here in the lap of luxury, with automobiles and serfs at your command and—"

"Oh, cut it out, Katy! Of course your dotter needn't to work for her livin'! She's welcome to live here and I'll continue to give her a lib-ral allowance—when she apologizes and promises to behave."

Just here, Charles suddenly and unexpectedly put in a word. "Ah—by the way—we know, of course, Mrs. Leiter, that your daughter never received the allowance

given to you for her. My father will hereafter pay her allowance to her directly and not through you," he announced with a slight bow, while Leiter stared at him in mingled astonishment, rage and admiration—then turned quickly to search Katy's face for a confirmation of his son's bold guess.

"Well," said Katy indignantly, "you two big stiffs needn't blame me for spendin' that money when Barbie wouldn't spend it! Never one penny would she touch! I couldn't make her!"

"But you kept on drawin' the allowance all the same!" said Leiter bitterly. "Oh, hell you make me sick!"

"Jacob!" she admonished him. "If Reverend Watts could hear you sometimes!"

"You're got no conscience! You're untrustworthy! You're—"

"Flatterer!" smiled Katy, slapping at him with kittenish playfulness.

"You see!" he appealed to Charles. "You can't make any more impression on her than if she was a rhinoceros! Well, now," he turned upon her impatiently, "you get out and leave Charlie and me alone!"

Charles again rose and stood while Katy, warbling as she went, "Believe me if all those endearing young charms," walked from the room.

## CHAPTER V

**I**T was just a few days later that Charles, on Saturday morning, coming again to consult with his father as to the negotiations which held him in Leitersville, walked in upon another consultation that was being held in the work-den. The great leap of his heart in coming suddenly face to face with Augusta for the first time since her accident, revealed to him how potent she still was (if he had ever indeed doubted it!) to rouse him emotionally.

She was standing, with a cane for her lameness, near the door which opened into her mother's bedroom and Mr. Leiter was seated at his desk.

She colored deeply as Charles came into the room from the hall, but her eyes met his unwaveringly. Bowing to her with the same mock ceremoniousness he always used towards her mother, he stood tentatively, his leather case of papers in his hand, waiting for his father to be ready for him.

He was piqued to see that Augusta, meeting his ironical greeting with a faint smile of amusement, turned her attention so completely to the interview she was having with his father that she seemed scarcely aware of his presence. Of course that was only part of her clever acting. She knew he was there all right! Apparently she had no more sense of shame in her scheming than her mother had in hers!



Jacob Leiter, in a blustering, bullying tone, was addressing his step-daughter and Charles' entrance did not check him.

"Naturally, I can't have my wife's dotter working for her living! I'm perfectly willing to support you—give you a lib-ral allowance and a good home right here with your mother—on the condition that you apologize to me for the way you've been actin' up in this town and promise to behave yourself in the future. There, now, ain't that a fair offer?"

The faintly amused look lingered on Augusta's lips as she quite gently answered, "I've come to thank you, Mr. Leiter, for your hospitality and to tell you I'm going on Monday to New York."

"And I tell you you're too young (and too handsome, for that matter) to be livin' alone in New York and I won't leave you do it! That's final! I got to do my duty by you—you're my wife's dotter!"

"I appreciate your kind intentions—but of course I can't accept anything from you."

"You'll have to, for neither your mother nor I will leave you take a job. It'd disgrace me and you shan't do it! So put that out of your mind. Here you stay!" (bringing his fist down upon his desk.) "Understand my condition, however—you got to promise to quit your cuttin' up 'round here!"

"If I remained in Leitersville, I should not quit my 'cuttin' up,' so it's lucky for you I'm not going to stay. Your terror of me, though flattering, is unnecessary."

"Terror of you, nothin'! afraid of what a young jane like you can do to me! Well, well!" grinned Mr. Leiter.

"But don't fool yourself, girl! You're a-goin' to behave yourself in Leitersville! Ain't you got any dotterly feelins about you that you'd run around here tryin' to make trouble for your mother's husband?"

"No," said Augusta serenely, "I have no daughterly feelings about me."

"Say, that's monstrous!" declared Jacob in genuine disgust. "For a dotter to be ungrateful to the mother that bore her and brought her up—"

"My mother did not bring me up. She's never done a thing for me in my life except injure me."

"Huh!" grunted Leiter. "Well, that's a nice way for a dotter to talk, ain't it?"

"It's a very melancholy truth for a daughter to know!"

"All the same you're got no need to go off and work for your livin'. I'll support you all right—perfectly willing to. But naturally I'm not leavin' you misbehave—"

"But why should you support me?"

"Because I'm your mother's husband."

"But as I'm perfectly able to support myself, why should I be dependent—and enslaved?"

A woman who refused to be supported was such a novelty in Mr. Leiter's experience that he did not for a moment take her refusal seriously. Such a thing was unthinkable of Katy's daughter.

"Don't you fool yourself," he said threateningly, "by thinking you can come it over me!—showin' off at the Civic Club and wherever, while you're eatin' out of my hand! You'll soon learn if you try any more of your tricks—step-daughter or no step-daughter!"

"I shall never eat out of your hand," said Augusta

quietly. "I do thank you again, very much, for my enforced acceptance of your hospitality. I am going on Monday to New York to take up some journalistic work for a liberal journal, in which I hope to continue, to your further confusion, my 'cuttin' up.' "

"I'd like to know why you're got a spite at me!"

"I haven't, only at the social system that produces you."

"It's the people of my class—not yours—that are doing the work of alleviatin' the sufferings of the poor!" Leiter argued.

"You alleviate their suffering while you would tear to pieces the man or woman who would put a stop to your creating the conditions that cause their suffering; conditions which produce poverty on the one side and huge unearned fortunes on the other."

"The man or woman that would arouse the populace against the prosperous, ought to be torn to pieces!"

"If we tell the toilers that they've a right to all the fruits of their own toil, we are the enemies of law and order!" shrugged Augusta. "Doesn't it ever occur to you men who wallow in money while others starve, that the 'law and order' you defend is unjust and artificial?"

"So this is the way you apologize and promise to behave, is it?"

"Yes—this is the way."

"Now, look here, young lady! I'd leave you starve before I'd support you while you went 'round spoutin' ideas like that!"

"Now, look here, Mr. Leiter! I'd starve before I'd let myself be supported by any one."

"Huh!" said Mr. Leiter between sneering and jocular-ity, "I guess you wouldn't object to Charlie's supportin' you in a style you never were used to!"

It was Charles, not Augusta, whose face flamed with shame. Looking more amused than embarrassed, Augusta turned away and left the room.

"Now!" cried Mr. Leiter as Charles, looking white and grim, seated himself at the desk beside him and opened his leather bag, "ain't she the stubborn-head! To hold out like that against me! She thinks I don't mean what I say! She'll see if I don't! You watch her knuckle down when she finds I won't pay up till she gives in!"

"She'd starve first—as she told you!"

"Aw, Charlie, don't be thick! She was playin' to the gallery! Tryin' to impress you how fine and noble she is! Don't you be such a sap as to get taken in by any such gaff! Did you ever see a Bolshevist that refused a fortune? I didn't!"

"I never saw a Bolshevist have a chance to!" returned Charles, wondering whether his father were right—whether she was only playing up to him in her lofty refusal to let any man support her.

This doubt still lingered in his consciousness when an hour later, going through the hall, to leave the house for his hotel, he came so suddenly and unexpectedly upon Augusta limping with her cane towards the stairway, that he lurched against her at the very top of the steps and would have caused her, if he had not caught her arm, to fall headlong.

"I beg your pardon!" he exclaimed in quick remorse

for his awkwardness and with a thrill of horror at her narrow escape.

Pale and breathless she drew away from his supporting hand and leaned limply against the wall.

The aversion and resentment he cherished struggled with his instinctive regret at having hurt a lame, helpless girl—when it flashed upon him that here again was a ruse, a trick to work her wiles upon him; she had arranged to be at the head of the stairs when he should come along. That would have flattered him if she were not her mother's daughter—

"I am horribly sorry I jarred you—did I really hurt you?" he asked stiffly, yet solicitously.

"No, it's only the fright," she said, still breathless. "I'm all right."

"Can I help you down?"

"No, thank you, I'll go back to my room."

"Will you take my arm?" he asked with his ceremonious air.

"It isn't necessary," she answered, turning to walk back through the hall.

The pent-up hot passion in his heart broke out for an instant. "May I speak to you?" he asked in a tone of repressed intensity.

She stopped—came back a few steps.

"I want you to know that I agree with my father in thinking your behavior treacherous and shameful—coming here under an assumed name and trying to turn this town against him!"

"I had assumed my name long before I had ever heard of your father. As for my working against him—he is

no more to me than my mother is to you—less than nothing.

“You deceived and fooled and lured me—knowing all the time that if I had had the least idea who you were, I wouldn’t have—wouldn’t have—” he floundered and stammered.

“Wouldn’t have what?” she coolly asked.

“Wouldn’t have brought you here as librarian, treated you as my cherished friend, made a fool of myself talking to you about yourself and your mother while you were all the time laughing in your sleeve—”

“Laughing! I really never felt that what you said to me about my mother and myself was funny!”

“You were simply making a dupe of me, using me—”

“If you are so stupid and undiscerning as to believe that, then your opinion of me doesn’t in the least interest me,” Augusta cut him short, again turning away and walking as resolutely as her lameness would permit, down the hall—leaving him with a bewildered sense of having his own great grievance against her turned back upon himself, putting him in the wrong instead of her! He stared after her with the dizzy, helpless feeling of have taken a moral somersault.



## CHAPTER VI

**T**HAT afternoon Jane happened to meet Mr. Calloway on the street.

"I'm sorry I can't stop," he greeted her hurriedly as he lifted his hat and shook hands with her. "Can you walk with me and tell me how you managed your newspaper adventure? I'm on my way to answer a hurry call to a sick-bed."

"I'll walk with you," asserted Jane, "though our church members, the Leiters, won't approve of it!"

"Will you let me be human for once and say, 'Confound the Leiters!'"

"You may say damn them, if you want to; I shan't take it hard!"

"Very well, then—no, on second thought, I'll say, Bless them! It's better for me and can't make any difference to them. How did you work that newspaper office?"

She related to him as they walked how easily she had trapped the editor of the *Bulletin*.

"But I understand that Mr. Watts disapproves of my sermon almost as much as Mr. Leiter does," said Mr. Calloway. "So how does he stand your championing me so effectually?"

"He can't stand it! I didn't intend to tell him that I had had a hand in it, but you can't keep anything to yourself in Leitersville! You see, Mr. Kleinfelters, the editor, when Mr. Leiter blew his head off for publishing

the sermon, was so craven as to blame the whole thing on me! Of course, then, Mr. Leiter came to the Manse to blow up Robert and me and of course Robert was outraged at what I'd done and oh! it's a dog's life I'm leading!" sighed Jane.

"You have all my gratitude and sympathy and affection—all that the law allows me to give you!" said Mr. Calloway with an ardor that set Jane's heart to thumping.

"You have refused to resign from your Church, we're told—is it true?" she asked.

"My Vestry will of course stop my salary; it's their only means of driving me out, since they cannot dismiss me except for heresy or immorality. So I'm preparing a parting thunderbolt. On Sunday morning, Mrs. Watts, before you enter The Church On The Avenue, step around the corner and take a look at my Church—walk past the door—"

"What is going to happen?" cried Jane.

"You'll have to hold your curiosity in leash until Sunday."

"Let's see—this is Saturday four-fifteen P. M. Eighteen hours to wait! I'll die! Why, where are we, Mr. Calloway?" she suddenly inquired as she realized that they were in a part of the town unfamiliar to her.

"In a little, almost hidden section I've never been in before," he answered. "This street lies just between the Avenue and Saur Kraut Hill. It's a district I've intended to investigate when I could find time. Rather given over to vice, I think. No one from this part of town ever before summoned me to a sick bed. The telephone message asked me to come at once."

"May I go with you? I often go with Robert on his visits to the sick."

Mr. Calloway assented with what Jane recognized to be a restrained eagerness and pleasure. In his moral isolation and loneliness (with Augusta for the time being inaccessible), she knew, from her own heart-ache and spiritual hunger, what her sympathy and companionship must mean to him.

"This must be the house," he announced, stopping before a three-storied brick dwelling on a narrow, dingy, dirty looking street that was hardly more than an alley. Every window of the house was hung with cheap lace curtains and the white marble steps were very dirty.

"Looks like a lodging-house," said Jane.

Mr. Calloway, glancing at the lace curtains, glancing up and down the deadly quiet street, at Jane in her unsuspecting unconsciousness of the possibility of such evil as he knew might lurk in this street and especially in this gaudy house, was almost tempted to turn away without ringing.

But he thought, "Whatever she may see here can't hurt *her!*"

In response to his ring, the door was opened cautiously and a slatternly woman, dressed in dirty, worn finery, and looking haggard and sleepy, peeped at them through a narrow space. At sight of the clergyman, she looked amazed and alarmed, for although Mr. Calloway did not wear the clerical garb, his face was familiar to every one in Leitersville.

"I've come to see the sick woman," began Mr. Calloway, lifting his hat.

"Sick woman? What fur sick woman? It ain't no sick woman here."

"I received a telephone message to come here to this address at once."

"Aw, yes, you did!" scoffed the woman skeptically. "You just want to git in here and nose about! You can't bluff this chicken, Reverend!"

"But why was I sent for?"

"You wasn't sent fur! Unlest—say! Mebby some one's stringin' you!—that is, if you ain't tryin' to string us!"

Jane suddenly clutched his arm. "Look!" she whispered—and he turned instantly to see two young men, who had come out from a house across the street, standing on the top step and pointing something (it looked like a pistol) directly towards Jane and him. But he saw in a moment that it was a kodak. And instantly he knew that a trap had been set for him. This house was a brothel, probably a well-known one, and he was being photographed on the door-step.

But that his enemies should be able to snap his photograph in company with an exceedingly pretty young woman was perhaps far better luck than they had hoped for. His realization of what was happening was too late to foil the plot. The young men had already done their quick work and were turning back into the house from which, as soon as he and Jane had appeared, they had stepped forth.

During their homeward walk, Jane did not seem to realize the true nature of their plight and Mr. Calloway did not enlighten her. All she did realize was that her

photograph, taken with Mr. Calloway, might cause unpleasant gossip.

"I hate to be such a worry to Robert!" she sighed. "I seem unable to keep out of scrapes that injure him!"

"I'll see Mr. Watts if he's at home when we get to the Manse."

"He will be. Is it worth while telling him anything until we see what happens? I don't believe in going to meet trouble!"

"I'm sorry, but I shall have to see him, Mrs. Watts. He may have to come to your defense! Will you let me see him alone?"

## CHAPTER VII

ROBERT'S manner, alone in his study with Mr. Calloway, was grave and reserved; courteous, but not cordial; a manner that would have been disconcerting to a weaker man than Calloway.

"I was tricked, this afternoon, into calling at a house of ill-fame," he told Robert quite dispassionately. "And my photograph was snapped as I stood on the door-step. Unfortunately, Mrs. Watts happened to be with me."

"What? What! How did it happen?" exclaimed Robert, terribly perturbed.

Mr. Calloway explained how it had happened.

"You see," he continued, "they've got to find some charge against me, in order to get rid of me, so they're trumping up immorality. The two young men that took the photograph from the door-step across the street from the brothel, are employed in Mr. Leiter's office."

"Mr. Leiter is a member of my church, Mr. Calloway," Robert gravely protested, "and I see no reason for believing him capable of such scurrilous conduct! Let us, please, leave him out of it. You cannot know that he had anything to do with it!"

"I merely want to warn you, Mr. Watts, that I fear he will use this photograph in his newspapers to injure me. Of course it cannot really injure me. It will only injure Mr. Leiter. Neither can it really injure Mrs. Watts. But it may give my vestry the excuse they are seeking for asking my Bishop to unfrock me."



"I can hardly insult Mr. Leiter, can I, by asking him whether he trapped you with a fake telephone call to a brothel, in order to discredit you with your Bishop! What do you expect or wish me to do, Mr. Calloway?"

"To protect your wife."

"A large order!" said Robert wearily. "She keeps me very busy protecting her from her own ill-considered acts!"

"What was her 'ill-considered act' to-day, Mr. Watts?"

"It is not very judicious, Mr. Calloway, for you and her to be seen walking so often together about the streets!"

"'To be seen?' 'Often?'"

"Her partisan attitude towards you as against my own conservatism—the notorious episode of her having got the *Evening Bulletin* to publish your sermon, known by every man, woman and child in Leitersville, is causing most unpleasant gossip! And now this thing!"

"Mr. Leiter's friendship for you is probably too strong to allow that photograph to be used, I should think!"

"I should hope so!" said Robert. "And do I understand that you are asking me to use his friendship for me to protect you?" he inquired in his serious tone of gentle admonition.

"You may have observed, Mr. Watts, that I've never been concerned about my personal welfare here. But do I understand that you are unwilling to be even the indirect means of protecting me from calumny?"

"I am unwilling to be dragged into any of your sensational affairs, Mr. Calloway!" said Robert with sudden

irritability—the Christian virtues of patience and forbearance having their limits.

"I'm sorry that in this instance, Mr. Watts, you can't very well escape—unless you are willing to take the risk of having that photograph used."

Without further words Calloway bowed and left the room; and although Robert followed him to the front door, the rector did not turn his head for any further leave-taking.

When a few minutes later Robert found Jane alone in her room, apparently not nearly so disturbed as she should have been over what had occurred, his exasperation found vent in an outburst of reproach.

"This reaches the limit!" he cried, striding back and forth before her as she lounged in the window-seat. "With the gossip over that newspaper business still hot, for you to deliberately go and get into a fix like this! A house of ill-fame! A—"

"I shouldn't wonder if one of your Elders draws rent from it, dear!"

"Be quiet! What do you do such things for? Answer me!"

"Dear me! *I* didn't send a fake telephone message to Mr. Calloway or bribe two blackguards to take his photograph! Vent your indignation on those who deserve it, dear!"

"Why do you seek that man's society? Have you no pride, no sense of propriety?"

"None. Not of the sort you seem to admire. I do have a sense of decency that makes your 'propriety' look to me rather rotten! Go and rage at Jake Leiter if you

want to save your pride and propriety! And you'd better not lose any time about it. He won't lose any in getting that photograph published!"

"Do you realize how humiliating it is to me to have to go to Mr. Leiter on such an errand? To have to explain and apologize for my wife? Why can't you stay at home and behave yourself?"

"But do you like Jake Leiter's behavior in this affair? It is he that is responsible for Mr. Calloway's being photographed with me on the steps of that house!"

"You don't know that and have no right to say it!"

"Well, anyway it is he that must stop the publication of the photograph, Robert, so do get after him quickly before it is published."

"This is Saturday, so it can't appear before Monday. I shall have to see Leiter this evening, I suppose," said Robert bitterly. "It's just possible he'll refuse to withhold the photograph after all the annoyance you've given him in every direction!"

"And after all the expense and pains he's been to to get the photograph!" suggested Jane.

"Can't I make you see the seriousness of your own offensive part in this business?"

"I'm as sorry as you are for all the trouble it causes you, Robert. But I'm not conscious of having done any wrong."

Robert gazed at her hopelessly for an instant—then turned away without answering and strode from the room.

His interview that evening with his chief Elder in Mr. Leiter's work-den was even more humiliating, as it turned out, than he had anticipated it would be.

"When you ask me to stop the printing of that photograph in my newspapers, Mr. Watts, you're asking a lot! That photograph gives me just the handle I want to enable me to rid this town of the worst menace to its peace and prosperity that ever happened to it!"

"But on moral grounds, Mr. Leiter, you can't use it—since of course Mr. Calloway is not guilty!"

"How do you know that, Mr. Watts? I'm not so sure! Any one that makes such a noise about Christianity as he does, you want to look out for!"

"But you might as well say that my wife is guilty!" cried Robert.

"It's awful unfortunate that she happened to be along with him! The photographer tells me he caught her full in the face, but Calloway only sideways and not so clear."

"But to use this thing, Mr. Leiter, would be blackmail! An outrageous calumny! The telephone message was a fake—"

"He faked it! He didn't get any telephone message callin' him to that house, Mr. Watts!"

"I wouldn't question Mr. Calloway's word. No one who has the least acquaintance with him could for an instant believe this thing of him! It must be a frame-up on the part of his disaffected Church members who want an excuse to get rid of him!"

"Well, *I* believe it of him, Mr. Watts! D'you get me? I say I believe it! You only got to look at the kind of face he's got to know he ain't a celibate!—look at his coloring and his lips and the fire in his eyes!—and don't tell *me*! Ever take partikkler notice to his face? Why, that fellah's fairly burnin' up with temperament!

If you ast me, I think he *was* takin' your wife to that house!"

"Oh, no, you don't, Mr. Leiter! Come, come, you know better! I can't even discuss it with you! I—"

"Wait! I ain't sayin' she knew she was bein' taken."

"Her being in the picture makes it impossible for you to use it!"

Mr. Leiter shook his head. "You ask too much, Reverend. That photograph is worth too much to me! That photograph is going into both my papers!"

"Not with my wife! You can't do me such an injury!" exclaimed Robert. "You can't mean it!"

"I certainly don't owe anything to your wife, the way she's all the time going against me! And the way she backed up my crazy step-daughter in her wild carrying-on! Mrs. Watts encouraged Barbie in her contrary-ness! However, Mr. Watts, I don't want any more scandal than we've had already in connection with our pastor's wife and I'd gladly do you the favor to have her photograph out of the picture—on condition—(mind you, on condition)—that you don't run round sayin' Callo-way's been falsely accused and slandered. Your word on that—and Missus' picture comes off!"

"But how can you think it right to do this thing against Mr. Calloway? You can't be sure he is guilty! And unless you are, it is very, very wrong to use that photograph to malign him!"

"I ain't maligning him! I'm showing him up! I'm ridding this town of him! Don't you know how that man's influence in this town is spreading and growing? Why, if I left him stay here, he'd ruin the place for me

and you, Reverend! You'd soon find out how his influence is undermining The Church On The Avenue! There's only one thing to do and that is to get rid of him! This picture we got will do it! And you ask me not to use it!"

"Yes, I ask you not to use it!"

"Nothing doing, Reverend," said Mr. Leiter with a conclusive sweep of his hand.

Robert sat, for a moment, in silent and painful thought.

"Well?" inquired Mr. Leiter, "how is it? Does Mrs. Watts' face stay on or come off that photograph?"

"Of course I can have but one answer to that—her photograph must not be published!"

"It won't be if you'll pass me your word that you won't defend Calloway. Otherwise—"

"Well! Otherwise, Mr. Leiter?"

"Well, to be sure, Mr. Watts, after such a disgrace to our church as what that'd be, our pastor's wife in such a compromising position, you could har'ly expect to remain here—do you think?"

Robert, pale and deeply troubled, did not meet his Elder's eye, as again he heavily considered the nasty situation.

Above all things he must protect his wife from such a disgrace, he told himself. Surely that was his first, most sacred duty. And of course he was not morally responsible for Calloway. The whole thing, aside from Jane, was none of his business. Leiter wasn't asking him to say he believed Calloway was guilty—only to refrain from declaring he believed him innocent. He could re-



fuse to discuss it; to say anything about it, one way or the other.

A difficulty loomed up. Jane! She would despise such a stand. And she wouldn't keep quiet! She'd run up and down the town proclaiming, not her belief, but her knowledge of the rector's innocence!

"It's up to you, Reverend," Mr. Leiter repeated, "to say whether or not Missus' picture goes in my papers along with Calloway's—or whether it don't. If it does, then that means that your position here is untenable. See?"

"You are asking me to do a thing I don't want to do—to connive at the plotted ruin of a man whose only fault is a lack of good judgment!"

"I'd be an awful nut if I left such a chance to ruin him go by!—dangerous as what he is to my interests and to the welfare and prosperity of Leitersville! And understand, Mr. Watts, my chance would be doubled and tripled if I used that photograph as it is! I sacrifice a good bit for friendship's sake when I consent to take off your wife's face. Well, what do you answer?"

Robert thought he knew what Jane would answer. "Do your worst—but you can't harm me. Nothing can harm me but my own cowardice and weakness!" Yes, that would be the answer of an emotional woman who did not use her common sense and compromise with life as you found it. But a sensible, level-headed man—

It was of course Jane he was considering (he kept assuring himself), and not his position.

He stood up as at last he spoke. "You leave me no choice, Mr. Leiter. You can take Mrs. Watts' photo-

graph off—I'll not defend Mr. Calloway. But neither will I accuse him. You must be content with my neutrality."

"That's all I ask—that you keep quiet!"

Mr. Leiter also rose and held out his hand—and after an instant's hesitation, Robert gave his own. They clasped firmly over the compact, and the minister took his leave.

Robert was becoming, in the ministry, so accustomed to juggling with his conscience that he was coming to find it comparatively easy. To be sure, there was always Jane to be reckoned with now—she troubled him a lot more than his conscience did! He could reason with his conscience. But when you tried to reason with Jane, you always came up short against a conviction as uncompromising as a stone wall!

On his way home, he wondered how he could make Jane see this thing about the photograph.

Well, he wouldn't try. She'd have to be content with just what he chose to tell her—

It was the first time since their marriage that he had come upon a situation that required him to be furtive with *her*! The realization made him uneasy, uncomfortable—and this state of mind did not conduce to his amiability when he presently met her questioning eyes.

"Well, dear?" she anxiously inquired when, upon entering the Manse, and finding her waiting for him in his study, he volunteered no information as he took off his coat, hat and gloves. "You persuaded him not to use the picture, Robert?"

"Yes."

"Any difficulty about it?"

"Not much."

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

"Let this be a lesson to you my dear! Keep out of compromising situations!"

"But how can I know where and when Jake Leiter sets his traps for the unwary? The idea of blaming me for a bogus telephone message and the action of two bribed blackguards!—I hope you told Mr. Leiter what you thought of him!"

"I've no proof whatever that Mr. Leiter plotted this thing, Jane."

"His ready willingness to give up using the picture does make him look innocent," Jane conceded. "We'll give him the benefit of the doubt. It must have been Mr. Calloway's vestry that did it. It must—"

"Yes, yes, my dear," Robert cut her short, his face flushed, "please don't let us talk about it any more! I'm so dead sick and tired of it! Do you mind leaving me now? I want to work a bit on my sermon for to-morrow."

He had been wont to beg her to sit near him while he worked out his sermons; he could work better in her dear presence, in the atmosphere of peace and joy and completeness in which it enveloped him—

Jane went sorrowfully up-stairs to the loneliness of her own room.

## CHAPTER VIII

**O**N Sunday morning Jane, before stepping into The Church On The Avenue, walked around the corner to find out what it was that Mr. Calloway wished her to see at St. Marks.

A great crowd was collected about the church, all staring up at what seemed to be a bulletin or a poster high over the door. A strange hush hung over the crowd. Their faces were serious and somber; some of them bitter; all of them deeply impressed, intensely interested.

No one noticed Jane as she lined up with the others. She looked up and read in clear, large type:—

YE WHO ENTER HERE, TAKE HEED!

CHRISTIANITY

OR

OUR PRESENT SOCIAL ORDER?

(I) CHRISTIANITY AFFIRMS THE SUPREME VALUE OF THE HUMBLEST LIFE OVER ALL THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD.

OUR SOCIAL ORDER SACRIFICES HUMAN LIFE FOR PROFIT.

(II) CHRISTIANITY PROCLAIMS THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

OUR SOCIAL ORDER SPLITS SOCIETY INTO TWO WARRING RIVAL FACTIONS.

(III) CHRISTIANITY PROCLAIMS, "WHERE

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY."

OUR SOCIAL ORDER SUPPRESSES EVERY ATTEMPT OF THE LABORER TO ATTAIN LIBERTY.

(IV) CHRISTIANITY, PROCLAIMING BROTHERHOOD AND THE GOLDEN RULE, WOULD MAKE ALL MEN AS OF ONE FAMILY.

OUR SOCIAL ORDER KEEPS THE MANY IN DEBASING POVERTY, THE FEW IN ENERVATING LUXURY.

(V) THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IS LOVE.

BUT OUR SOCIAL ORDER CREATES WORLD-WIDE UNREST, JEALOUSY, HATE, RESENTMENT, STRIFE, BITTERNESS.

(VI) CHRISTIANITY BIDS US "SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

OUR SOCIAL ORDER GIVES ITS GREATEST REWARDS TO MONOPOLISTS AND EXTORTIONISTS.

YE WHO ENTER HERE TO WORSHIP JESUS CHRIST, WHICH WILL YOU UPHOLD—CHRISTIANITY OR OUR PRESENT SOCIAL ORDER?

As Jane turned away and went slowly back to The Church On The Avenue, she thought, "But the Church doesn't stand for Christianity any more than it does for Buddhism! It stands solidly for 'our present social order!'"

She went into her husband's church and sat at his feet while for three quarters of an hour he preached to an

enthralled congregation on the theme which was now becoming popular—"A Warless World." He so fluently cited not only the religious, but all the economic, political and diplomatic reasons against war, that he astonished Jane by his familiarity with them. While war had been popular he had never admitted the validity of one of these reasons against it. He who had been an earnest advocate of Preparedness, now pointed out that it only invited, never prevented, war. He who had publicly prayed for the success of the arms of the Allies, now unblushingly affirmed that Jesus Christ and war could not be mentioned in the same breath; that war was not only un-Christian, but indecent!

Though Jane thought it the clearest, strongest sermon he had ever preached, it disheartened her far more than his futile discourses on "Sin," or his minute and detailed descriptions of the monstrosity he called "God," or his confident assertions as to what "heaven" was like. Because while he now went as far or further than any conscientious objector had ever dared to go during the Great War—quite as far as Eugene Debs had gone—the value of all that he said was vitiated, was made mere "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals," by the fact that, unlike his martyred Master, he waited until it was not only quite safe but very popular to say it. No martyrdom for the modern Christian minister!

Jane's heart sent up a great thankfulness for the few like Mr. Calloway who kept alive her faith that human nature was a thing worth trying to save from dry rot!



## CHAPTER IX

**C**HARLES LEITER'S constant contemplation, during a day and a night, upon Augusta's departure for New York on Monday morning, to work for a journal the name of which she refused to divulge to her step-father; to live at a boarding-house the address of which she declined to tell her mother—led him, by Sunday afternoon, to the realization that he must not, could not, let her be swallowed up into the unknown like that, completely out of his reach. He had supposed that he never wanted to see her or speak to her again; that his step-mother's daughter must forever be anathema to him; that her having deceived him and led him on to courting her, paying homage to her—

Well, the simple, unconquerable fact was that no matter what she was, or who, she still charmed him more than any woman he had ever known; that his hunger for her vastly outmeasured his prejudice and aversion. His very instinct of self-preservation urged upon him the vital necessity of finding out where, in case his urge to forgive her became irresistible, he could find her in New York.

So, on Sunday afternoon, after a one o'clock dinner at the hotel, he came to his father's house with the intention of putting himself (accidentally) in her way; or, if she remained in her room, deliberately sending for her to come to him in the parlor.

He found her writing in the sun-parlor that opened off from the dining-room.

At sight of him she instantly rose to go away.

"Don't let me disturb you," he hastened to stop her. "You are busy?"

"Yes, but if you want this place I can write in my room."

"Don't think of leaving on my account. Sit down. I interrupted your writing letters, did I?"

"No, an article for the journal that has engaged me," she replied, sitting down again at the table.

Charles seated himself near her.

"What's the article about—may I ask?"

"About the age-long human struggle for liberty and democracy!"

"Let liberty and democracy struggle a few hours more, while you talk to me, will you?"

"Dear me, I had somehow gathered the impression that you were spending your young life in dodging and escaping me!"

"I give up the struggle! It's too much for me! You'll never again hear of my trying to 'dodge' you!"

"You've decided I'm not so dangerous after all?"

"Much more dangerous than I had conceived it possible for—your mother's daughter—to be to me!" he said flushing.

Augusta, looking puzzled, shook her head, "I don't get that!"

"It will come to you—when you've thought it over."

"I've really important things to think about," she objected.

"You are still determined to disregard my father's wishes and go away to-morrow?"

"Yes, of course!"

"Augusta, look here!" he said impetuously, "even if father allowed you to work for your living, I would not!"

Augusta regarded him speculatively. "How," she inquired with impersonal curiosity, "would you go about it—not 'allowing' me?"

"But you must see that it would be very mortifying to us—to both father and me—to have you working for a living?"

"But how ridiculous, Charles! When you know so well what I think about parasite women! Why, even if you were blood relatives of mine, I would not live on you."

"Thank God we are not blood relatives!"

Augusta looked bewildered. "One moment you are offering to support me in luxurious idleness, the next you are thanking God you are not related to me!"

"I mean—because I—because I hope our relation may be closer than that of blood!"

He heard himself say it!—with mingled alarm and ecstasy. Making love to his step-mother's daughter! He could not draw back now if he wanted to—and he was glad he could not! Glad that he had committed himself irrevocably to this madness that was heaven—

He saw how dazedly Augusta was regarding him—well, of course it was as thrilling a shock to her as to him, to have him succumb so absolutely to her; he had had no idea of committing himself when he had come here this afternoon! But his feelings had carried him off his feet.

"I think of you night and day—the world is nothing

but you—you, Augusta! I want you, I want to make you my own, fast and sure and forever! God knows I didn't intend to say this to you, I've tried to fight it—but that's all over now—I know and feel nothing but my hunger for you! Nothing else matters to me nor ever will!"

"You will be so horribly sorry, Charles, after a while, that you said this to me! Don't say it!" she gently protested.

"I'd be sorry all my life if I didn't say it! I mean it, Augusta!" he insisted reassuringly.

"My ideals are not yours, Charles; my gods are not your gods."

"Much more so than you think—else why am I here at your feet—offering you all that I am and have—for your service forever!"

"Just think of the revulsion of feeling you would have at my Mother's vulgar elation! At her claiming to have brought it about! At the constant little irritations that would kill your love!"

"How little you know me! Nothing could kill my love! We'll laugh together, dear, over all those 'little irritations!'"

"No, we won't, Charles! You and I would never fit together! It would be awful!"

"It would be heavenly!"

"It wouldn't to me—and I ought to be considered too!"

"I'd spend the rest of my life considering you!"

"I hope, my dear, you can find a better use for your life! I'm sorry, Charles, but you will really have to get

over it. For, you see, I'm not in love with you and I know I never shall be."

He did not take that seriously. To his egotism it was incredible. Still he was rather surprised that she would stoop to coquetry—it was not a bit like her—

"Have I got to work awfully hard, dear, to make you say you love me and will marry me?"

"No, you won't have to work at all, because I shan't let you waste time and energy on anything so useless!"

She rose, gathering up her papers. "Understand, Charles, dear, I don't love you and never, never shall. You must believe that."

He stared at her wildly—unable to take in the incredible fact that he had proposed marriage to his step-mother's daughter and had been unqualifiedly rejected. And while he stared—before he could collect himself to answer her—she turned away to leave him.

This time he did not try to stop her. His sense of her utter sincerity was too overwhelmingly crushing.

## CHAPTER X

ROBERT weighed in his mind the advisability of destroying the morning *Gazette* on Monday before Jane should see it. But he decided against it, since of course he could not keep the facts from her. The *Evening Bulletin* would repeat the story against Calloway, with its accompanying incriminating photograph.

Robert found it increasingly easy to exonerate himself for his promise of silence and neutrality.

"If I did defend Calloway, no one would believe me in the face of that photograph taken right on the step of that notorious house! People are so pitifully gullible where evil report is concerned! My defense of him would not in the least help him—and would only harm me. And how can I be sure, anyway, that he is innocent—"

The first thing Jane saw, when she came down-stairs to breakfast on Monday morning, a few minutes ahead of Robert, was the picture of Mr. Calloway standing *alone* on the top step of that house of ill-fame, covering a quarter of the *Gazette's* front page, as it lay on the breakfast table beside Robert's plate.

Before Robert joined her she had read through, with burning eyes and throbbing heart, the whole scurrilous story that accompanied the photograph, a story giving minute details of the rector's habit of visiting the house of the photograph; of suspicion having been aroused and



a spy having been set upon his tracks—with the result of the “above inescapable proof of his guilt.”

Jane greeted Robert with eyes of horror. “Oh, Robert, Mr. Leiter deceived you! He has published the photograph! With the most awful story—packed with lies! Now he’ll have some plausible excuse about the newspaper office having misunderstood his order to withhold the picture! What shall we do to correct this vicious slander?”

Robert did not answer at once. He took the paper which she held out to him and hastily ran his eye over the sensational story of the “trapped” clergyman. Then without comment, he handed the paper back to her, seated himself at the table and began to cut his orange.

“Mr. Leiter ought to be disciplined by the Church!” cried Jane. “Robert, here is a case where you can’t compromise! You’ll have to take a stand! Mr. Leiter gave you his promise—”

“That no injury should come to you, Jane. That’s all I asked of him. I’m not Calloway’s keeper! It takes all my time saving *you* from the consequences of your own rashness! If Calloway will persist in getting all the influential people of Leitersville down on him, it’s certainly not up to me to come to his rescue!”

“But this is calumny! You know it’s all false—”

“How do I know?”

“I’ve told you! I was with him, wasn’t I?”

“Unfortunately you were! Hereafter avoid him!”

“You can’t mean to tell me, Robert, that you will let this slander go unchallenged?” demanded Jane incredulously.

"If I challenged it, I'd have to drag you into it, wouldn't I?"

"You won't have to drag me—I'll run into it! If you don't defend Mr. Calloway, I will!"

"Look here, Jane!" Robert laid down his orange spoon and leaned across the table, his face white. "I hate to say this to you, but I am not sure of Calloway's innocence. A man of his temperament—you only have to look at him to know what his temperament is!—and you may not know it, but men do go to those places with women—"

"With women—like me?"

"God knows what might have happened to you if you had not noticed the two men with the kodak!"

"You are not seriously telling me that you believe this whole thing to be anything more than a Leiter trap to ruin Mr. Calloway!"

"I am. I hate to suggest such evil to you—such hypocrisy in one you've idealized—and of course I don't *know*— I only suggest that where there's smoke, you know—"

Jane suddenly rose from the table and started to leave the room. But Robert caught her hand as she would have passed him and drew her to him.

"Remember, Jane, I'm a man and lots better able to judge of a case like this than—"

She drew her hand away and looked at him with a bewildered pain that smote him.

"Jane, I beg you don't do anything rash! I've had trouble and worry enough over this matter! Now keep out of it! I've got you out once—don't make me—"

She turned away and fairly ran out of the room. The next moment Robert heard the front door open and close—

He wondered what on earth she would do? Go to Leiter and demand that he retract? She'd find herself beating her head against a rock! Go to Calloway? And get herself ostracized and her husband ruined! Who could have dreamed that his marriage, so ideal in its beginning, could turn out to be so impossibly difficult! That his love for her was still strong in spite of everything which she made him suffer, in spite of her lack of appreciation of him, her lack of sympathy with his aims and his work, was evidence of how great a love it had been—and still might be if she were not so blind to her own happiness as to ride over it rough-shod!

The very principles on which their two lives were built made any hope of adjustment seem vain.

Meantime, Mr. Calloway, at that early hour of the morning, was telephoning to Augusta that, as he absolutely must see her at once, he was coming immediately to Mr. Leiter's house, and would she meet him at the door?—as the only way he could get past the butler "would be over the fellow's stunned and prostrate body?"

Now although Mrs. Jacob Leiter always staid in bed until noon, she had, conveniently on the night table beside her bed, a telephone by means of which she did what she called "keep tabs" on many of her husband's affairs as well of those of her servants.

She was greatly disturbed by the brief dialogue she just now overheard between her daughter and the redoubtable rector of St. Marks. She would nip that little

plot in the bud! He should not see Barbie alone! A poor failure of a preacher that got everybody down on him that *was* any body, trying to make up to "a winner" like Barbie "that could take her pick of the best!" Well, not while her mother was "on the job!"

It was ghastly to have to get out of bed at half past eight in the morning, but a mother's duty could not be shirked—

Barbie never had been any good to her to speak of; never had paid for the nuisance of bearing her! If her mother didn't get something out of her marriage, it would be sheer waste of capital!

She rose sleepily and began to dress, yawning and swearing as she struggled with her weariness.

Perhaps it was a good thing, after all, she decided, that Barbie was leaving town to-day and getting out of this minister's reach.

But while she was "camouflaging her face," (as she herself accurately designated the process of beautifying herself) Mr. Calloway, who had arrived in a taxicab a few minutes after his telephone message, was already in the parlor with Augusta.

"I've been warned by friends," he was explaining to her, his face rather white, but evidently having himself well in hand," that the Patriotic Legion of Leitersville is planning to raid the rectory at ten o'clock this morning and escort me out of town on a rail—perhaps tarred and feathered."

"Oh!" gasped Augusta, every drop of color leaving her face. "Because of the low-down story in the *Gazette*?"

"Not at all! Not my 'immorality,' but my opinions are what the Patriots object to! Don't be frightened," he said, laying a reassuring hand—his fine, sensitive, yet virile hand—on her arm. "The Legion is going to be disappointed. They aren't going to find me at the rectory. They have no idea that I have been warned. Last night some of my faithful people took my belongings to their homes, packed and sent them to New York. So I have nothing to do but board an early train."

"Oh, but why didn't you leave last night?" cried Augusta in an agony of apprehension. "They may get you this morning before you can reach a train!"

"I waited to go this morning with you because you are not yet really able to travel alone and I was anxious about your trying to. I shall go with you on the nine-thirty."

"Only a half hour before they expect to get you! It won't do! Your taxicab is at the door?"

"Yes."

"We'll drive to Columbia at once and take the New York train there!"

"I won't risk taking you in the cab with me, I might be waylaid. For all I know, the taxicab driver is a 'Patriot!' I'll drive to Columbia alone and meet you on the train."

"I'll drive with you to Columbia!" Augusta insisted. "I refuse to leave you until I land you safe in New York!"

"Why leave me then?" he asked, his lean face alight as he took her hands in his.

Augusta's head swam. A vision of such joy and glory as she had not known life could hold, thrilled her soul and body.

He took her into his arms. "Will you risk casting your lot with mine, you beautiful girl?"

"I'm unworthy of you!" Augusta, all her life proudly self-reliant, heard herself saying in humility and ecstasy.

"Don't idealize me, or you are destined to suffer a shock! But—beloved!" he lingeringly kissed her face on his shoulder—"you and I together can surely live and work to some purpose!"

"We'll thresh more out of life to the square inch than any man and woman together ever did before!" she said in high and blissful confidence.

She drew herself from his arms. "Wait for me here five minutes while I get my wrap and suit case."

She hurried from the room as fast as her still painful knee would allow—while Calloway, in a tense excitement, paced the floor.

In a moment the sound of rustling skirts made him turn—to see coming into the room his prospective mother-in-law, regarding him aggressively as she advanced.

"Good-morning," he greeted her, his tone and manner, though civil, being negligent, uninterested. He picked up a chair at his elbow and placed it before her. "Will you have a chair?"

"Young man, do you know who I am?" she demanded, resentful of his casual manner which lacked appreciation of the fact that he addressed the wife of the powerful



Jacob Leiter. "I'm Mrs.—Jacob—Leiter!" she announced impressively.

"Have two chairs!" he smiled, placing a second one at her disposal.

"Don't get fresh! If you're waitin' here for my dotter to come down, you're wastin' your time. She's takin' a bath."

Mr. Calloway, folding his arms and leaning against a table, regarded her with impersonal speculation, not concealing some astonishment.

"So," she stated, "you may as well go. Good-by!"

Mr. Calloway, slightly smiling, did not move.

"If my husband finds you here, you won't wait round here long for my dotter! You'll find out you can't be as independent as a hog on ice in Jake Leiter's town and then come hangin' round his dotter! *He'll* hand it to you if you come tryin' it out!—I'll say he will!"

The minister did not speak, but his eyes seemed to say to her, "How can *you* be her mother?"

"What's your game anyhow?" she demanded.

"The old game of marriage, madam. I am going to marry your daughter."

"Oh, no you aren't! Not if I can help it!"

"But you can't in the least help it!"

"You can't fool me, young man—I know a fortune-hunter when I see one! And leave me tell you that if you think that by marryin' Barbie, you can walk into her rich step-puppa's happy home and hang up your hat and settle down to live in swell style on Jake Leiter's money, you've got another guess comin'!"

"I won't have time to hang up my hat here, thank you; I shan't be near enough and I shall be too busy."

"I tell you Jake Leiter won't give Barbie a cent if she marries poor!" she warned him.

"We shall both marry very rich and live luxuriously with youth and health and ideals—those are our riches!"

"Aw, cut out the wishy-washy soft soap suds! I tell you Barbie is not marryin' you! She can do a lot better than marry a poor preacher! Well, leave us hope!—though if it ain't just like her contrariness to want to throw herself away on a damn fourflusher!—takin' up with just any one at all when she could marry into the very best society!" she said indignantly. "Why, if Barbie half tried she could marry Charlie Leiter! Yes, she could!" she repeated as though Calloway had contradicted her.

"I agree with you, Mrs. Leiter, that there's nothing your daughter couldn't do in the way of marrying, but don't you realize there are some things she wouldn't do?"

"I'll never consent to her marryin' a poor preacher that could not half support her!"

"Your refusing your consent is interesting, but irrelevant."

"If you're counting on anything from Mr. Leiter—"

"I am counting on a very great deal from Augusta—and I trust she's counting on a lot from me. Eh, my darling?" he asked as Augusta at the moment, wearing hat and coat and carrying a suit case and umbrella, which he at once took from her, walked into the room.

"Barbie! You're not going to marry this cheap skate! This adventurer!"

"An adventurer is the only thing I'd ever dream of marrying! An adventurer I hope he always will be!"

"Sounds like your contrariness!" said her mother wildly. "Think, Barbie, when you could live ~~here~~ in lux'ry and have the grandest time and go into the very best society and marry well! A pretty outlook for you, marryin' a—"

"A glorious outlook for me! A martyr's life is so much less dull than a millionaire's!"

"And we shall do our part," added Calloway, "in making things less dull for the rest of the world!"

It was at this instant that Jane, dishevelled and wild-eyed, rushed in upon them.

Augusta took her into her arms. "The only cloud on my joy is my leaving you to your safe and unexciting and dreary fate, Jane! Clement and I are leaving at once—never to come back!"

"Then," cried Jane, "Mr. Leiter will be forced to deny that libel in his papers—about his own wife's son-in-law!"

"So he will! Point that out to him, mother," was Augusta's parting admonition to her exasperated, maddeningly helpless parent.

## CHAPTER XI

JANE'S first letter from Augusta, signed "Augusta Calloway," announced that her husband had found a post on a religious liberal paper and that they were settled in a comfortable suburban bungalow with a small car in which they often escaped from civilization into the wilds.

Jane's depression, these days, over her life's disillusion, was much lifted by the bright, not to say dazzling, prospect of a baby.

As for Robert, so great was his delight at this contingency that he had a hard time to restrict it within "decorous" bounds.

When this prospective addition to the Leitersville census began to be whispered about, an elderly spinster, prominent in The Church On The Avenue, one of Robert's ardent devotees, was reported as saying primly, that she had supposed her pastor to be "much too spiritual" for such a thing as this to have occurred! "I'm disappointed in him!" she proclaimed.

It was only a few months after the baby's birth that the Reverend Mr. Watts received a unanimous call to a large church which, like the one he was leaving, was on the Avenue—*the* Avenue also.

Sorry as Leitersville was to lose him, it was very proud "to have it to say" that Fifth Avenue, New York, had come to Leitersville for a pastor.

"To be sure we could not expect to keep such a man

here—such a wonderful preacher! And such a good Christian!—though, to be sure, his wife was rather giddy and something of a vamp, poor man!—and not at all sympathetic or helpful—”

Jane took some comfort from the fact that what she called her “ministerial unfitness” would not be so conspicuous in New York as it had been in Leitersville.

“I can be lots more independent—and less hypocritical.”

She wrote to Augusta, “Divine Providence is certainly good to Robert, calling him to a city so big that his infinitesimal wife’s peculiarities won’t be the talk of New York!”

She wondered a little at her own apathy over Robert’s great worldly success.

“Why don’t I glory in it? I’m not unambitious, goodness knows! I’m not so awfully unworldly either!”

But her honest mind knew that it was the essential unsoundness of such success that held her from rejoicing in it.

“The successful minister,” she decided, “instead of trying to lift up his flock, deliberately seeks their level; the level of their ignorance, their superstition, their inhibitions and obsessions—and upon these weaknesses of his people he climbs high in the ministry!”

She wondered what it was going to do to her, living all her life with such cheap popularity. She knew what it was doing to Robert. Ever since Mr. Calloway’s departure, it had seemed to her that that furtive look of her husband’s eyes, which had always vaguely troubled her, had steadily become more and more intensified.

"Robert's Gospel of CAUTION FIRST is incompatible with *any* religious faith!" she concluded.

In her much marked copy of Emerson were two underscored passages:—

"Whoso would be a man must be a non-conformist."

"Let a man take reputation and life in his hands and dare the gibbet and the mob by the truth of his speech and rectitude of his behavior."

Robert Watts, the inveterate compromiser with his Christian principles, had been lifted to the highest post the Church had to give; while Clement Calloway, the man who refused to compromise, was repudiated by the Church as an intolerable nuisance.

"And that," concluded Jane, "is the Church of to-day!"

THE END









